

TELL SOMEBODY ELSE HOW GOOD IT IS  
**LOVE STORY**

REG.U.S.PAT.OFF.

EVERY WEEK

**MAGAZINE**

NOV. 28, 1925  
15 CENTS

**ILLUSTRATED**



*Victor Thorne  
Ruby M. Ayres  
Georgette MacMillan*

STREET AND SMITH PUBLICATION

# Famous Marcelling Cap Wins U. S. Patent

**U. S. Bureau Issues Patent for Novel Invention, which Marcel Waves Hair at Home in 15 Minutes**



After moistening the hair with McGowan's Curling Liquid, stretch the elastic headband of the Marcelling Cap with the hands and pull it down over the hair. Then with the fingers or an orange stick puff out the hair in little "waves" between the ribs of the cap and let them dry.



After you have adjusted the Marcelling Cap you can read or finish dressing while the curling liquid is drying.



After 15 minutes the hair is dry, the Cap is removed—and your mirror reflects as beautiful a marcel as you ever had in your life!

If you read the newspapers or magazines, you've heard of the McGowan Marcelling Cap. It's one of the outstanding successes of all time, being used by nearly 40,000 girls and women with gratifying results. Further recognition now comes in the form of a Patent from the United States Patent Office.

Of course we are proud of this honor, but of even more significance to us are the enthusiastic recommendations of the thousands of satisfied users—the many letters we receive every day thanking us for this great beauty invention.

## For Every Style of Hair

It makes no difference how you arrange your hair or what condition it's in—whether it's soft and fluffy or stiff and unruly, thick or thin, bobbed or long—this amazing device insures a mass of lovely ringlets, waves and curls **all the time**, at practically no expense and with only 15 minutes' time every few days.

Think what a saving this will mean to you! The entire outfit will cost you less than two or three marcelles at a beauty parlor

and then your hair waving expense is ended. Instead of a dollar to a dollar fifty, your marcelles will cost you from 1 to 2 cents! Instead of an hour or more spent in beauty parlors, you wave your hair at home in 15 minutes!

But even more important than the saving of time and money is the benefit to your hair. Any specialist will tell you that constant marcelling with artificial heat is most injurious. Shortly after you discard the harsh, artificial heat method of marcelling and adopt this safe, natural way, you'll begin to see the difference in your hair. Split ends and unruly strands will vanish. You can put the waves in the same place each time and soon you will find that the Marcelling Cap is **training** your hair and making it much easier to keep your marcelles.

The curling fluid that goes with the McGowan Waving Outfit is most beneficial to the hair, too. It not only accentuates the curl, but acts as a tonic for scalp and hair, eradicates dandruff and itching, and promotes rich, luxurious growth. It is absolutely neutral and is guaranteed not to stain the hair or affect its color in any way.

## A Summertime Necessity

You know how hard it is to keep your hair waved in summer. Hot, sultry weather

takes the curl out. Summer sports—swimming, golf, tennis, motoring—all take their toll and make it doubly hard to keep your hair looking as it should. But with this amazing hair waving outfit you can laugh at all your troubles, for you know you can always have a fresh marcel without expense every time you need one.

In spite of the fact that the United States Patent Office has issued a patent for this new hair waving outfit, in spite of the fact that nearly 40,000 girls and women throughout the country are now using it with gratifying results, we don't ask you to take our word for the remarkable results the Marcelling Cap gives. We want you to try it and see for yourself. That's why we make this amazing trial offer and take all the risk ourselves:

The McGowan Marcelling Cap by itself has always sold for \$1.87 and the McGowan Curling Fluid for the same amount, or a total of \$3.74. In order to take advantage of this trial offer, simply sign and mail the application in the lower right hand corner and when the postman brings your outfit deposit with him \$2.87 (plus a few cents postage). After trying the outfit for seven days, if you are not delighted with results just return the unused portion and we will refund the purchase price in full.

## Send No Money

We could not afford to make such a liberal offer if we didn't know it would do everything we claim for it—if we didn't know you will be delighted if you give it a trial. We take all the risk. Your mirror is the sole judge. If you don't find this marcelling outfit the greatest beauty aid you ever used—if it doesn't bring you the most beautiful of marcelles just as we promised—if you are not simply delighted with both the Waving Cap and the Curling Liquid in every way—the cost of the trial is on us. Don't put it off another day. You have nothing to lose; everything to gain. Tear out the coupon attached, fill in and mail today.

**The McGowan Laboratories**  
**710 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago**

## COUPON

**The McGowan Laboratories,**  
**710 W. Jackson Blvd., Dept. 131**  
**Chicago**

Dear Mr. McGowan—Please send me your hair-waving outfit, which includes your recently patented Marcelling Cap and a bottle of Curling Liquid. I agree to deposit \$2.87 (plus postage) with the postman upon its delivery. After seven days' trial, if I am not satisfied with results in every way, I will return the outfit and you are to refund the purchase price in full, without any further obligation on my part.

Name .....

Address .....

Note: If you expect to be out when the postman calls, enclose \$3.00 with your order and the McGowan Marcelling Outfit will be sent postpaid.

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PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

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## Friday the Thirteenth

By EDITH SESSIONS TUPPER

*Do you like mystery? Then read this story, which will begin soon in Love Story Magazine*

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The next LOVE STORY MAGAZINE will be on all news stands December 5th

# HER HEART'S VOICE

She had faith in her voice and so she spent all of her carefully hoarded savings on having it trained. Then, when her teacher pronounced her a finished product and she went to the city and tried to make her voice give back some of the gold she had spent on it she found herself a failure. Her voice suddenly vanished, leaving her unable to do more than speak. The great artist who tested voices for opera laughed at her and told

Georgette MacMillan tell you the remainder of the story next week in this magazine in "The Phantom Voice."

\* \* \*

CHRISTMAS is in the air so, next week, LOVE STORY MAGAZINE will give you two Christmas stories—one by Louisa Carter Lee, "The Luck of Heart's Haven," and the other by Arthur Jamison, "Cupid's Convict." Both are gripping stories of love and struggle. Don't miss them.



her to go home. But she couldn't. Her pride wouldn't let her. She went into a hospital for training as a nurse. One day, after she completed her course, she was sent on a case and there, desperately ill, was the man who had laughed at her voice. He was ill not only of body but of soul. A woman had broken his heart, a woman whose fame as a singer he had helped to create. Ceasingly he cried, in his delirium, for her voice in a song he loved. Finally, when she could hear the tortured cries no longer the girl he had laughed at tried to sing. His cries ceased. He sank into a much needed sleep and—but let

MARGARET GIBBONS MACGILL will give you, next week, "His Bride," a story that is up to the usual MacGill standard.

\* \* \*

THERE will be several other short stories, among them "A House of Cards," by Mrs. Harry Pugh Smith; "Love's Dark Hours," by Violet Gordon, and "Birthright," by Evelyn Frankish Stroh.

\* \* \*

THE WALL BETWEEN," by Victor Thorne, will be concluded, and "The Scarred Heart," by Ruby M. Ayres, will be continued.

\* \* \*

LISTED in the poetry section you will find "Merry Christmas," a fine holiday wish from Edith Tatum, and "The Little Estelle," by Victor A. Berry.

# LOVE STORY MAGAZINE

**PUBLISHED WEEKLY**

Vol. XXXIII

November 28, 1925

No. 5



## On Love's High Altar

*By*

*Violet Gordon*

SYBIL, in hibiscus red, was lovelier than any flower that wears the name! Her dark, shingled hair, like blue-black satin in the moonlight, swept back from a widow's peak, rounding to two crescent points on her creamy pale cheeks. Her features were dainty and patrician; her eyes, swept by lashes like curving scimitars, were dark as summer pools, and yet so bright that it seemed as though two candle flames lurked behind them. For the rest of it, she was graceful as a swallow; slight, and boyishly athletic. Hadn't she won the junior shooting trophy, besides a dozen other cups? In manner she was both charming and direct, popular with girls as well as with men.

To-night, by the purple wistaria on the veranda of the Wyncroft Country

Club, she stood beside Harry Barstow, breathless; for Harry had just kissed her for the first time.

"But—you really shouldn't!" she murmured, half afraid of her joy in his swift mastery. "Some one might see us."

"I don't care if they do," he returned, recklessly taking her into his arms. "You're going to marry me, aren't you, darling? I've loved you for ages and ages. Let's be properly engaged from to-night on, because—you can't escape me now I know you care a little."

The moon must have laughed at the deep blush that stained her cool cheeks.

"A little?" said Sybil lightly.

"Sweetheart!" Harry slipped his fingers beneath her chin. "Is it more?"

She yielded, almost drowning in a rush of gladness.

"Mountains more," she admitted drolly.

Beneath them the white syringa wafted incense of mock orange. The orchestra within, as though sensing a need for sweeter music, shifted from jazz to the lilting strains of a waltz. Everything was beautiful, scintillating! For didn't young love permeate the world?

When Sybil and Harry mingled again with the dancers, several glances were cast their way. Mrs. Aaron Wayne, the self-appointed leader of Wycroft social life, with grimly set mouth, contributed hers with haughty disdain.

There was something metallic about her, from the gold tissue on her gown to the cold sapphire blue of her eyes, which were diverted to another pair of dancers—Clemens Stone and her own daughter by a first marriage, Helena Grant. All at once Mrs. Wayne's well-preserved face grew old and haggard.

Helena was a pretty girl, who always wore an expression of doubt, augmented somewhat by the shape of her eyebrows. There was always a wistful shadow about her eyes. Young Stone was an attractive, auburn-haired man who had lived in Wycroft less than a year. He had the reputation of making friends easily, but on the whole appeared to show marked attention to no particular girl. Something of a "dark horse," the other men called him.

From surveying these two, Mrs. Wayne's gaze returned to Sybil and Harry Barstow. Ingeniously, she placed herself near them as the music stopped.

"My dear Sybil," she said with a forced note, "how charming you are tonight! That hibiscus shade is just right for you."

Sybil was pleased.

"I'm so glad you like it," she cooed.

Mrs. Wayne smiled, and with a little nod to Harry drew the girl to one side.

"I wish you'd drop in to-morrow afternoon. Helena and I are getting up a tennis tournament, and we'd like to talk it over with you."

"I'd love to help," Sybil told her.

"That's splendid! I'll expect you then at three."

It was almost morning when the dance broke up, and Harry drove Sybil home.

"Good night, small scarlet flower," he whispered at the door, his arms enfolding her with a wealth of tenderness. "Remember—you're promised to me now. Say it again, sweetheart."

"Say what?" she shyly teased.

"You know what I mean, little flirt."

At that moment Sybil blossomed in Harry's eyes into something divine. She placed a slim fragrant hand on each side of his face and drew his willing lips to hers.

"I love you—first and always—better than life itself," she told him with strange solemnity.

A brief hush too sacred for further speech fell upon them. Immediately after, Harry—straight, strong and fair, as Sybil was dark—rode away into the rose-and-amber dawn that was unfurling like a fairy banner of knighthood, urging him to feel full of courage.

Upstairs the early light struck beneath the shade of her father's room and showed him to be sleeping. Sybil tiptoed in and dropped a kiss light as swan's down on his forehead. How frail he looked! He was thin and overworked, with purple hollows about his eyes. One hand hanging from the side of the bed twitched spasmodically. Very gently Sybil raised it to the pillow, and watched the sleeping eyelids flutter in a half smile of thanks.

"How happy he and mother will be when they know!" was her unspoken thought while she undressed.

For herself she would gladly have married Harry had he been a day la-

borer in his father's factory—as indeed he was at the present time. It would have been pure joy to prepare his dinner pail, and make their little house shine like sunlight for his return. But Sybil was wise enough to know that her father and mother, being human, could not fail to be pleased that their daughter was marrying the future owner of the Barstow Steel Works.

Wycroft was a small place, unimportant save for this big steel plant, which spread like a giant octopus over the north end of the town. It seemed that every creature in Wycroft depended for his living, directly or indirectly, upon the factory. Unquestionably, the families most publicly associated with it were the Barstows, the Waynes, and the Garlands—James Barstow being owner, Aaron Wayne general manager, and Floyd Garland, Sybil's father, assistant general manager, who of the three was much the hardest worker.

As Sybil thought of her father's appearance this morning, she wondered if his responsibilities were wearing him down. She rejoiced in a purely unselfish spirit at the new status he would achieve as Harry's father-in-law. For James Barstow was a chronic invalid whose days were numbered, according to popular belief. He had put his son into the business to work his way up among the factory hands, so that when he came into his inheritance at a near future date he would be conversant with all branches of the work.

Sybil slept late that morning and combined breakfast with luncheon.

"Where's daddy?" she asked when she kissed her mother.

"He's gone to New York, dear. Some troublesome business. I'm afraid your father's been speculating unwisely. He's had to raise a mortgage on the house and—other things."

"Oh!" Sybil's face fell. "I went into his room on my way from the

dance, and I thought he looked tired. But, mummy dear, I have news for you."

She looked like a trim little girl in her fresh middy, plaited skirt, and small, flat-heeled shoes. Mrs. Garland glanced up quickly, and suddenly her eyes misted with tears.

"My baby," she said, "I think I can guess."

A wave of color touched Sybil's cheeks. She flung herself into her mother's lap and whispered the whole story.

"Aren't you glad—glad?" she asked.

"Of course I am, darling. There isn't a nicer man in Wycroft than Harry Barstow. But you seem so young! I hope it won't be too soon."

Then womanlike, through lunch, she began to plan Sybil's trousseau, and wove tinsel dreams that carried her back to her own girlhood when Floyd Garland, handsome and ambitious, had claimed his bride in far more modest circumstances.

So happy was Sybil, that she almost forgot her appointment at three. At the last minute she pulled on a soft felt hat and raced down Beacon Street to the Waynes' big house. A maid took her at once to a small boudoir where the energetic woman received only her most intimate callers.

"It's dear of you to be so prompt," she said, kissing her visitor. "How are your father and mother?"

"Daddy's gone to New York," Sybil told her.

Mrs. Wayne's eyebrows shot up perceptibly. She closed the door, seated herself, and took the young girl's hand in her own. Though the action was friendly, even the touch of her fingers conveyed a metallic quality.

"Poor child," she said, "I'm afraid I'm going to make you unhappy." Sybil looked surprised; and her hostess continued: "I made an excuse about the tennis tournament, because I simply had

to see you. Only I'm afraid this talk will be equally painful to us both." A tense pause; then: "It's about your father, dear. Have you noticed a change in him lately?"

"He—he works very hard and he looks a little tired," began Sybil.

"Tired?" Mrs. Wayne shook her head. "He's worried, child. And I don't wonder. Your poor father is carrying a terrible load."

"Please!" Sybil was frightened. "What do you mean?"

The older woman picked her words carefully.

"It's been an open secret for some time that Mr. Garland has been investing on margin in fictitious stocks. My husband begged him to keep out of it, but your father went his own way, regardless. Of course he discovered his mistake, but by that time his resources were exhausted. He borrowed money on his house from Mr. Wayne—"

"I know," Sybil interrupted. "Why are you telling me this?"

"Because other matters have transpired. I'll explain as well as I can. A Western company made a heavy payment to the Barstow Steel Works in bearer bonds, which you may not know are readily transferable. These bonds, my dear, disappeared from the office safe before they could be deposited in the bank, though only the principal officials of the company knew the combination of that safe—" She hesitated as though unable to proceed.

There was a hard, painful lump in Sybil's throat.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"Not two days later," Mrs. Wayne explained, "your father's debts were liquidated."

Sybil felt weak and sick.

"It can't be true," she whispered.

"I'm afraid it is true, Sybil. Your father faces ruin and disgrace unless he can replace the money he—er—borrowed—by to-morrow. And he knows

that in such a short time he can never replace fifty thousand dollars."

"Fifty thousand!"

Mrs. Wayne sprang to her feet and held a glass of water to Sybil's lips. The girl was on the verge of fainting. Her father, whom she loved devotedly, who had always seemed the soul of integrity, in prison, branded for life! Her mother would be broken in spirit and health.

"Mother will die," she gasped. "It will kill her! Is there nothing I can do?"

The woman was watching her closely.

"Yes," she said at last, "there is. But before I speak we must exchange pledges. You must promise to keep our pact a secret to the day of your death, and I to shield your unfortunate father."

Eagerly Sybil gave her pledge, Mrs. Wayne doing likewise.

"This may seem theatrical," she said. "But it is necessary for Helena's sake."

"Helena's sake!"

"Yes. I have money in my own right, and I am asking you to sell me Helena's happiness for the price of those bonds."

Sybil was bewildered.

"How can I sell you Helena's happiness?"

The answer came like a pistol volley.

"By giving up Harry Barstow."

For a minute Sybil thought she had heard wrong.

"Giving up Harry?" she repeated. "But I love him! And he loves me. We are to be married. I can't give him up."

"He used to love Helena," said Mrs. Wayne softly. "Helena will always love him. You have come between them, my dear."

Was this true? Sybil cast about for some proof of it. They had all been friends since childhood; but had Harry spoken directly of love to any but herself?

"I'm sorry if I have injured Helena," she managed to say. "But it's too late now. We—we are engaged."

"And do you think," the other asked, "that old James Barstow will let his son marry the daughter of a convict?"

Harry up, he will not leave me. I know it."

Mrs. Wayne concealed a smile.

"There is nothing so easy in this world as to capture the heart of a man who has just been repulsed for another."



"Mother will die," Sybil gasped. "It will kill her! Is there nothing I can do?"

Great suffocating waves beat upon Sybil's brain. Her father in prison; her mother dead—for that was what it would mean—and Harry lost to her either way! "Dear God," she silently prayed, "have mercy upon me, and help me!" Then aloud: "But even if I give

man. Has it ever occurred to you, my dear, that Clemens Stone is madly in love with you?"

Sybil was too overburdened to feel even surprise.

"No, I never thought of such a thing."

"Nevertheless, he is. He has confessed as much to Helena and me. If you will openly accept his attentions and marry him, I shall see that your father gets sufficient money to restore the missing bonds. You will know that I've kept my compact because Mr. Garland will suffer no harm. But if you don't agree—" She shrugged her shoulders.

In vain Sybil pleaded and wept, even going on her knees to this iron-hearted woman. Mrs. Wayne would not by so much as a word change her ultimatum. Sybil's eyes were haunted—drained of their youth, as she left the house. For she had been forced to agree, then or never! Not even a night for consideration had been granted her.

In the privacy of her own room she sobbed out the storm of grief in her heart, and found no relief, no possible loophole by which she might get the upper hand. Caught in the trap unwittingly spread by the father she loved, and sprung by an unscrupulous woman, she must renounce the dear gift of Harry's heart. And definite action was demanded of her even sooner than she expected. The telephone rang; a maid tapped at her door. Sybil, rousing from the stupor into which she had sunk, went downstairs.

It was Harry. Of course it would be Harry. He told her he had called several times.

"I was out," she explained lifelessly.

"Darling," came his voice, "no one can hear. I must tell you again—I love you!"

She could think of nothing to say.

"I'll call for you at eight o'clock, dear."

"But—but, Harry, I have a headache. I can't go out to-night."

He was keenly disappointed, but so sweet and patient.

"Of course, you can't go out if you have a headache, darling. May I come and sit with you if I'm very quiet?"

For a second she could not answer—such was her suffering. Finally: "Perhaps I'd better go to bed," she told him.

The wire seemed to tingle with his sympathy. It was the dance last night, he said, and he had helped to tire her.

When she put up the receiver she sat trembling beside it for longer than she knew. Again the telephone recalled her. This time it was not Harry but Clemens Stone.

"Hello, Sybil," he greeted her. "I have a bone to pick with you. You skipped my dance last night."

She replied automatically, said she was sorry. And he asked her to prove it by going with him to "The Wild Almond." He had the tickets.

The name of the play hinted vaguely at some association. Sybil was about to refuse when she remembered what Mrs. Wayne—

"Thank you," she accepted. "The usual time?"

"Yes. I'll call at eight."

Mrs. Garland was busy that afternoon. There were to be guests for dinner, and Sybil was able to avoid her. But on leaving at eight with Clemens for the theater, her mother stared after her with speculative, disapproving eyes. Surely this evening, of all evenings, Sybil should be with Harry! How strangely the girl was behaving! With a little shake of the head the older woman marveled at the customs of a younger generation.

It was not until Sybil was seated beside Clemens in a box at the right of the stage she realized the fatality of her action. She looked across the brilliantly lighted theater and saw Harry Barstow with an elderly aunt in the box directly facing her. Then she remembered!

A week before Harry had asked her to go with him to "The Wild Almond," and she had accepted. It was to this particular play that he had referred when he said he would call for her tonight. She had excused herself on

grounds of a headache; and here she was with Clemens.

Wildly she dreaded the moment when Harry would see her. And presently it arrived, as all inevitable things do. Harry, bowing to a friend in the orchestra stalls, raised his eyes. Sybil never forgot the slow horror that grew in them.

At that instant Clemens spoke to her, and she found herself laughing and chatting in a high key that bordered on hysteria. Clemens played up to her, so that the impression she gave was one of carefree enjoyment.

The story of the play never even registered. Sybil's later recollections of that three hours were nightmarishly grotesque. But afterwards when Clemens wanted to take her to supper, she refused; nor did she ask him in as he said good-by before the steps of her house.

A cloud filmy as tulle half obscured the moon. The hydrangeas by the veranda loomed ghostly tall in the shadows. Sybil was about to slip, shuddering, past them, when some one touched her arm. With the back of her hand against her mouth she stifled a scream. It was Harry.

"Why—why did you do it?" he asked, the hurt in his tones stabbing her with the poignancy of a knife blade.

She could not falter. If she did, the whole story must come out. She loved this man so dearly that if he put his arms about her, her strength would turn to water, and her father would be sacrificed.

"I shouldn't have let you kiss me last night. I—shouldn't have let you propose!" she cried in a small, breathless voice. "Please forgive me and—and forget me. I—can't be your wife."

She tried to dash past, but Harry caught her. She was in his arms, his heart pounding above hers.

"Something insane has happened to you," he said violently. "Last night I'll

swear you loved me, Sybil. If you didn't, why did you lie?"

Her face beneath his was drawn with pain. She closed her eyes that she might not see him, and in her desperation said the first thing that came into her head.

"You mustn't touch me—I've promised to marry Clemens Stone!"

Harry held her from him, his hands gripping her arms. "Sybil! And I loved you! I would have died for you!"

"Let me go!" she pleaded. "Please let me go!"

His eyes were hard as ice.

"Does—this mean good-by, then?"

Sybil clutched the veranda railing with trembling fingers and dragged herself up to the door. But her heart did not go with her. It seemed to lie crushed on the ground. Harry—his young manhood outraged—had trod upon it.

Days passed in which Sybil moved like a wraith, bearing her mother's reproaches, accepting Clemens' attentions. From that night on he had been very persistent. Slowly the subtle campaign launched by Mrs. Wayne to capture Harry for Helena, progressed.

At first Sybil saw nothing of the man she loved. He had left town to go on a fishing trip, it was said. On his return she caught a glimpse of him. He seemed hardened and changed. Indeed, he barely returned her nervous little bow. Later she saw him often with Helena, and knew that Mrs. Wayne was maneuvering skillfully to bring these two together. She often wondered how soon Harry's affections would become involved. Was it true, as Mrs. Wayne had declared, that a man who has been repulsed by one girl turns readily to another?

Sometimes she wondered at Clemens. Did he really care for her enough to be willing to take her, without love, as he

must know he was doing? Hardly two weeks passed before he proposed, and she apathetically accepted him. But it came upon her with surprise that he made practically no sentimental demands upon her. For this, at least, she was grateful.

Meanwhile Mr. Garland returned from New York and Sybil saw that he was in better spirits. It shocked her inexpressibly to associate her father with a felony, and she alternated between moments of silent recrimination and deep tenderness for his weakness. To her he had always been irreproachable; she had been proud of the trust reposed in him. Now she wondered if Mr. Wayne, who had the reputation of being a hard man, still suspected him, or if the bonds had been returned in such a way as to confuse suspicion.

Wisely, however, deeply as she disapproved of her daughter's seeming inconstancy, Mrs. Garland did not burden her husband with the story. And he learned of Sybil's engagement to Clemens without vast surprise. Although he did say:

"My dear, I must be a stupid old fogey. I always thought Harry Barstow was the favored man. Still, Clemens Stone is a smart young fellow—he's got on well at Barstow's."

The gossip rife among the younger set had escaped him, too. What, they wondered, had ever possessed Sybil Garland to make such a quick turn over? Who would have thought Clemens could go in and win against Harry—the most sought-after bachelor in Wycroft? And what a sly puss Helena must be to rush in and nab Harry on the rebound! Oh, yes, the nimble tongues wagged. But if Mr. Garland was deaf to it, Sybil and her poor distracted mother guessed what was being said and, for different reasons, bore their heads a trifle higher when they mingled with their curious friends. Each day Sybil grew a little paler, and her small frame more

ethereal, till it seemed that a breath of wind might blow her away.

"Don't you think we'd better announce our engagement?" Clemens asked one day. "I've received an offer from Mrs. Wayne's brother in New Orleans. He's fairly prominent there, and it would be a better position than I could ever rise to at Barstow's, without influence; though for a newcomer they've treated me decently. Besides, by going to New Orleans we'd get away from Wycroft."

At the moment it didn't occur to Sybil that Clemens' attitude was strange. She was too busy with her own thoughts. It would be a piercing relief to end all the uncertainty—to separate herself irrevocably from Harry. With this in mind, she agreed.

So the engagement was quietly announced. Arrangements were made for a small private wedding, although Mrs. Garland forestalled preparations with one last remonstrance.

"Baby, you're not happy," she protested. "Do you really love Clemens enough to leave your mother and daddy for him?"

Sybil fought to keep back the tears, and murmured all the loving reassurances she could think of. Mrs. Garland, finding it useless to expostulate, said nothing further. More time slid by spent in shopping and dressmaking, and further preparations. Clothes, clothes—all hateful to the bride who would wear them.

The eve of the wedding came, strangely unmarked by any festivity; for not only had Sybil refused to be entertained, but Clemens had excused himself from the customary stag dinner.

"There's something queer about the whole affair," their friends whispered among themselves. "I wonder what Harry is thinking about it!"

Sybil went early to bed, and shortly afterward heard her mother and father

close their doors for the night. But she could not sleep; and at last, overcome by restlessness, she stole down to the library to hunt for a book that would keep her thoughts from herself. While she was in the act of turning on the light the telephone rang sharply.

"Who can it possibly be?" she wondered.

To her unnerving astonishment Harry's voice answered her. "Sybil, is that you?"

"Yes—Harry." She laid a hand against her pounding heart.

There was a brief silence, then:

"Of course you'll think I'm off my bean to call you at this time of night, and maybe I am. But I've been thinking of you, and suddenly found myself at the telephone. It's just a little after ten. Will you let me see you, for only a minute? It isn't much to ask, is it?"

Sybil tried to be strong; tried to steel herself against him, and failed ignominiously.

"I'm afraid you mustn't come here. I couldn't explain it to mother. But I'll meet you at the Target House for that one minute."

He hesitated.

"I don't like you to go out alone."

"It will be quite safe," she assured him. "I'll be there waiting."

The Target House was a small building in the field at the rear of her father's grounds. For years it had been used by the younger people of Wycroft as a shooting club, so that each of its members possessed a key to it. Here Sybil had won her trophies, and here she and Harry had passed many happy hours before Mrs. Wayne changed the current of their lives.

It took Sybil longer than she had thought to dress and leave the house without rousing her mother. During this time her conscience was not idle. It bothered her not a little as she crept through the fence into the dark field

unlighted by stars where Harry was to meet her. Before she knew it she actually reached the door of the creeper-clad building, barely realizing that she ought not keep her appointment, for trouble would be sure to come of it.

In the grip of swift panic she turned to run home, when a sound caused her to dart among the shadows of the floating creepers. Some one was approaching from the opposite direction, some one who wore a garment that rustled like silk. The next instant Sybil saw a slim figure slip by and enter the Target House, a silk skirt brushing the watcher's hand in passing. Low voices, a man's and a woman's, came to her ear just as she stole from her shelter to fly silently homeward.

By good fortune, or bad, she reached the sanctuary of her room without disturbing any one. Here, till the early dawn, she tossed upon her bed, sobbing her heart out in ever renewed bursts of grief, till from sheer exhaustion she fell into a sleep, which merged into the most terrible awakening her imagination could ever have conceived.

Far down Beacon Street that awakening approached, personified in a small boy who proclaimed in raucous tones a *Wycroft Herald* extra, shot into press at a moment's notice.

"Horrible murder!" shrilled the newsy, exulting in his sales as door after door sprang open to eject excitement-seeking citizens. "Horrible murder at the Target House! Harry Barstow shoots Clemens Stone!"

Nearer and nearer came the voice till it blended with Sybil's unhappy dreams. Then suddenly she was awake—her eyes crazed patches of fear.

"Harry Barstow shoots Clemens Stone!" The words rang clear as the toll of a bell. Sybil saw her father dash to the fence and buy a paper from the boy. Somehow she got downstairs, and into the breakfast room. Her mother caught her in her arms.

"Don't look like that, darling. Wait till daddy sees—there may be some mistake. Newsboys always exaggerate."

Mr. Garland, his hands shaking as they clutched the newspaper, read the account. It appeared that about eleven of the preceding night a patrolman on his beat had heard the report of a revolver followed by a shout from the direction of the lonely Target House. On investigating the commotion he had found Harry Barstow, automatic in hand, bending over the seemingly lifeless body of young Clemens Stone. Mr. Barstow had acted as though dazed. He had denied the shooting but was unable to furnish any explanation. Mr. Stone had been removed to the hospital, where he lay at the point of death as the result of a head wound.

The paper went on to state that Wyckoff society had been aware for some time of a private feud between the two young men. Great sympathy was expressed for Mr. James Barstow, so prominent in the business life of the town.

Mr. and Mrs. Garland's eyes met. They knew that gossip was associating their daughter's name with this hideous occurrence, and their hearts quailed.

"I wonder," said Mr. Garland slowly, "how they happened to meet at that place, and why Harry wouldn't tell."

"I know." Sybil came to life. "At least I know why Harry was there." And she related her telephone conversation of the previous night, with its sequel.

"Dear—oh, dear!" Mrs. Garland sank moaning into a chair. In her mind's vision she already saw Sybil in the witness box.

"I must tell," the girl insisted. "It may help to clear Harry. And he certainly won't tell."

"Wait," said her father, his face the color of ashes. "Don't give this information to the police till I see Harry. Meanwhile"—he hesitated—"you are en-

gaged to Clemens Stone. You will have to go to him before he dies."

And so it happened that Sybil and her mother drove to the hospital, two nerve-shattered, broken women.

Before the big outer door they met Mrs. Wayne returning to her car, looking so haggard that neither of them at first recognized her. She bowed, but pointedly avoided them. Through the car window Sybil caught a glimpse of another figure, heavily veiled.

"I suppose Helena and her mother feel guilty," she thought, stirred by a flash of anger. "They've been inquiring for Clemens."

A nurse conducted them to a room outside which a police officer was stationed. Presently they stood beside the injured man's bed, their souls wrung with pity. They remained only a few minutes, for there was no possibility of Clemens knowing them. His masklike face betrayed no life. No breath appeared to stir beneath the snowy bandages and white sheets. It was a strange meeting between two who had thought that day would be their wedding day. But even as she looked upon him, Sybil's thoughts were with the man who was said to have injured him. She knew he would not have been where he was, but for her insane suggestion that he meet her at the Target House. At last with her mother she returned to a house shadowed with tragedy, there to await her father.

Mr. Garland, coming home, found events had moved. He was accompanied by an officer, and an order for Sybil's immediate presence at the Target House, where an inquiry was being held. Mrs. Garland broke down and had to be helped to her room. But both Sybil and her father bore up bravely.

"Hold up your head, little daughter," Floyd Garland whispered, "remember I am with you!"

She did as she was told, and like one in a dream accompanied the two



A nurse conducted Sybil and her mother to a room outside of which a police officer was stationed.

men to the scene of the crime. Here she was taken to the clubroom where she was faced by two detectives, old James Barstow in his wheeled chair, Aaron Wayne, and one or two others. As she entered she saw some one being led into an adjoining room, and felt sure she recognized Harry.

John Rowatt, the New York detective conducting the inquiry, studied her for a minute in disturbing silence, then produced a small linen handkerchief.

"Is this yours, Miss Garland?" he asked.

Her name was printed in full in one corner, so that the question seemed unnecessary. She acknowledged the ownership.

"It was found among the creepers outside this clubhouse," Mr. Rowatt continued. "At what hour did you lose it?"

Commanding her voice as well as she could, Sybil told the detective of her experience the previous night, explaining that though Mr. Barstow had asked to see her it was at her own suggestion that he came to this particular spot. She

described the incident of the strange woman who had brushed past her in entering the building, and added that she had immediately returned home.

"Have you any idea who this woman was, Miss Garland?"

"Not in the least," she told him truthfully.

"I understand," he continued, "that you were to be married to Mr. Stone to-day. It seems singular that you should have countenanced a meeting with another man under these circumstances."

Sybil shook her head helplessly.

"I can't explain," she said. "It was an impulse—you wouldn't understand."

After a period of silence, the grueling proceeded.

"If you had not been turned back by the—er—advent of a strange woman, who seems to have no bearing on the case, you might have had this interview with Mr. Barstow and"—his glance pierced her—"been interrupted by the man you were to marry!"

Sybil swayed. It needed no interpreter to tell her that this man did not

believe she had turned back without seeing Harry.

"In that case it would seem natural that your intended husband should represent this interview, possibly showing a not inexcusable anger toward Mr. Barstow. They may even have come to blows."

"Only that didn't happen," Sybil insisted in a small voice, her throat feeling dry and swollen. "I returned home without speaking to any one."

"At what hour did you reach home?"

"I don't know exactly. It must have been about a quarter to eleven, or earlier."

"Does any other person know for certain? What about you, Mr. Garland?"

"I make a practice of retiring early," said Sybil's father. "It must have been before ten when I went to bed last night, and I was not aware that my daughter went out. But I'm quite certain that she returned as she says."

Mr. Rowatt shifted in his chair.

"We are merely reviewing a supposition," he explained. "I think we might continue. In the event of trouble between these two men, Miss Garland, it is conceivable that a girl who held a trophy for shooting might come to the rescue of the man she secretly preferred, provided she could lay her hands on a weapon. And I might add, it has been proved that the revolver used upon Mr. Stone was the property of the Target House, and consequently must have been easy of access."

Sybil stared at her tormentor like a helpless bird paralyzed with fright by a serpent. Before she could think of an answer, there were sounds of a commotion in the adjoining room, and Harry Barstow tore open the door.

"This is an outrage!" he cried. "Evidently you don't know, Mr. Rowatt, that these walls are made of bristol board. I heard every word you said. I consider your suppositions both preposterous and insulting to Miss Gar-

land. The revolver was found in my hand."

"That is true, Mr. Barstow," said Rowatt, curbing his annoyance. "But we must probe all possibilities. A man of chivalrous instincts might shield a girl from suspicion of murder by some quixotic impulse. For example, it is credible that you took the revolver from her hand and pushed her into one of the lockers or out among the creepers when you heard the patrolman coming. No one can swear to the hour of her return."

Mr. Garland was filled with horror. He knew that old James Barstow, in his wheel chair, was behind this line of reasoning, fighting for his boy. And James Barstow, who practically owned Wyncroft, was indomitable.

Harry, too, knew this. But though he pitied his father a gleam came into his eyes.

"Then I shall confess!" he cried. "I did shoot Clemens Stone. You all secretly believe I did, and you're trying to get me off for abominable motives, unworthy of upright American principles. But you can't lay suspicion on an innocent girl in face of my confession."

There was a groan from the old man in the wheel chair; a rustle of dismay from one or two others. With a strained look in her eyes, Sybil, looking like an angel of triumph, stepped forward and held up her hand, commanding attention. If Harry would lie to shield her—and she felt sure he was lying—she could lie to shield him, right or wrong. With a prayer in her heart that God would forgive her, she spoke in a ringing voice:

"I can confess too! It all took place as Mr. Rowatt surmised. I shot Clemens. Harry Barstow is innocent."

A babble of confusion ensued, in which Harry's burning protestations were drowned. Sybil, now in her father's arms, was the cynosure of all

eyes. In face of the deadlock brought about by two who loved each other well enough to offer life itself upon the high altar, even hardened detectives were shaken. One of these two must be guilty, but which one?

Before further developments could take place the outer door was thrown open. Mrs. Garland, her face set with gentle determination, came in, accom-

mouth. Otherwise her mother would not have been ignorant of her whereabouts. She asked to be excused from a public explanation of parts of the letter, since they had no bearing on the accusation against Harry Barstow. And then she said to Sybil:

"Your mother has told me that you came here to meet Harry last night, but that a woman passed you by the



"Then I shall confess," Harry cried. "I did shoot Clemens Stone."

panied by Helena Grant. Instantly Mr. Garland and Helena's stepfather, Aaron Wayne, advanced as though to bar them out. But Mrs. Garland took a firm stand.

"I don't know what has taken place," she said. "But the truth can do no harm. Miss Grant has received a letter written and posted last evening by poor Mr. Stone, which in justice to everybody should be made public. She has behaved very splendidly in coming to me about it and I know you will all respect her as I do."

Helena's wistful eyes showed marks of long weeping, but somehow there were new lines of strength about her

door. I think it must have been I whom you saw. Clemens telephoned yesterday asking me to meet him here. He wanted to say good-by and to return my photographs and letters; but mother wouldn't have wanted him to come to the house. I thought he was saying good-by because he was going to be married, but"—her voice broke, and it was only by an effort that she managed to proceed—"I know now it was for another reason. Who—is in charge here?"

Her lips trembled.

Mr. Rowatt told her that he was, and without a word she handed him the letter from Clemens Stone.

The detective read it aloud:

DEAREST HELENA: Though I shall see you to-night you won't know till morning that I've taken my life. It is the only way I can right things, even if it seems a cowardly thing to do. After you have left the Target House I'll wait till I see the night watchman on his eleven o'clock rounds, and then I shall shoot myself. He'll find me at once, so that no one can be accused of murdering me. I'll leave it to you to bring Harry and Sybil together again. Tell them the truth about me. Sybil is a wonderful girl, and I wasn't much of a man to let her suffer as she has. For she loves Harry heart and soul. Your mother will have to shoulder the blame for separating them.

Good-by, my dear one, and remember, I am always loving you. CLEMENS.

"H'm," said Mr. Rowatt, breaking the silence that followed, "this letter clears Mr. Barstow and Miss Garland of any charge except a strong wish to protect each other." He glanced from one to the other quizzically. "Pretty dangerous business, young people! It's lucky your testimony wasn't under oath. And now, Mr. Barstow, since Miss Garland didn't even enter the Target House last night, suppose you tell us exactly what took place."

Harry explained that when he arrived at the rendezvous he let himself in with his key to await Miss Garland. Feeling that he shouldn't have suggested a private meeting, he had just decided to take her home the instant she arrived, when a man appeared. The newcomer flashed on a torch and, on recognizing Clemens Stone, Harry withdrew to the locker room, intending to leave by a small door and intercept Miss Garland. But he had trouble with the catch of the door, and by the time he got it open he could hear Stone holding a low-voiced conversation with, as he supposed, Miss Garland.

Puzzled as to how he should act, Harry awaited some cue. Presently a long silence fell. He grew anxious and was about to come out, when he heard a loud report. He rushed to the club-

room and found Clemens Stone on the floor, a revolver near him. Harry was not aware that he had picked the weapon up till the patrolman drew his attention to it.

"And I suppose," said Mr. Rowatt, "you wouldn't defend yourself for fear you might involve Miss Garland?"

"Naturally," Harry replied curtly, "although I knew she had not fired the shot."

Sybil's mother and father would have hurried their daughter away from the shower of enthusiasm that surrounded her, but Aaron Wayne prevented them.

"There are things in that letter of Clemens' that must be explained," he said sternly. "I am going to have a talk with Sybil and Helena."

"Not till a sick old man has made an apology," put in a voice near them, and old Mr. Barstow, wheeled by Harry, became one of the group. "My dear," continued the autocrat of Wyncroft, "I was wrong-headed enough to believe my boy was shielding you from real guilt. But you have made me so heartily ashamed of myself that I can only plead for your forgiveness." Very humbly he raised Sybil's hand to his lips.

With swift generosity she stooped and kissed the old man on one temple.

"It was natural to think that way about Harry," she smiled, "and, of course, I forgive you."

Harry said nothing. But the look in his eyes as they met hers brought the blood to Sybil's cheeks, and fed her starved little heart.

A few minutes later the group had melted away, all but Mr. Wayne, Helena, and Sybil.

"Now," said the former, "I'm sorry for you, Helena, but you'd better make a clean breast of it. What did Clemens mean when he referred to trouble your mother had made between Sybil and Harry?"

It was a bitter and humiliating con-

fession that followed. But Helena, with her new-found strength, went through it as stanchly as she had faced Rowatt, the detective.

It seemed that she had met Clemens Stone while she was visiting a friend she made at boarding school. They had fallen deeply in love. He had followed her to Wycroft, and secured a position with the Barstow Steel Works. Helena had told her mother of their secret engagement, but Mrs. Wayne had forbidden the young man to come to the house, as she had always planned on a more ambitious marriage for her daughter—Harry Barstow, in fact.

Clemens, desperately driven, asked Helena if she would run away and marry him anyway. But this had seemed impracticable, because neither of them had sufficient money to make a new start in life. Temptation came to the rescue and dropped into their laps. Mrs. Wayne went to New York. During her absence Helena and Clemens accidentally discovered on Mr. Wayne's desk the combination to his office safe. Clemens told her about certain bonds that had just that day been turned in and had not yet been listed.

"I know they're in your stepfather's safe," he said. "I can get them easily. We can exchange them and slip off to South America."

At first Helena wouldn't consent, but finally she did. On the afternoon preceding the Country Club dance, Clemens came to her with the bonds, and asked her to be ready to leave with him immediately after the dance. While they were talking Mrs. Wayne unexpectedly returned. They didn't hear her come in, and she overheard enough of their conversation to understand the situation. For the time being she gave no sign of this.

That night, to Helena's dismay, her mother accompanied her to the dance, and afterward invited Clemens to come home with them. Here she disclosed

what she knew, and threatened to tell her husband at once unless they both agreed to her terms. The bonds, of course, were to be returned. Clemens was to pay his court to Sybil Garland, and Helena was to encourage the attentions of Harry Barstow. Otherwise, Clemens would go to prison.

"But Sybil and Harry love each other—I'm sure of it!" Helena had wildly protested.

"They think they do," her mother had returned. "But leave that to me, I can manage Sybil."

"And how did she do it?" Mr. Wayne, his face gray with shame, interrupted at this point.

Sybil, sparing his feelings as much as she could, told of her interview with his wife. Her pledge of secrecy was now worthless.

"Heaven help me!" said the poor man. "It was true enough that your father made some foolish investments. Unfortunately I told my wife about this, and that I had lent him money. She had just that much fact on which to base her accusation against him. But why didn't you come to me in your trouble, Helena?"

"I was afraid of you," his stepdaughter confessed through her tears.

"Then it's all my fault." Mr. Wayne looked desolate.

The club telephone rang, and he answered it. A minute later he turned to Helena.

"Clemens Stone has recovered consciousness. He's asking for you. Do you still love him enough to go to him, my dear?"

"Yes, yes!" she cried. "Is there any hope?"

"Perhaps there is. If he pulls through, Helena, I'll do all in my power to give you both a chance. That will be my atonement for past neglect. We'll move away and start life all over again."

On their way to the hospital they left

Sybil at the gate before her house. Here she stood, watching Helena drive away toward the clouded future, and hoping with all her heart that her old friend would, in the end, find happiness. Suddenly she was conscious of some one touching her arm. She turned to find Harry beside her.

He took her to a little summer house where they had played together as children. Above them humming birds dipped and whirred among the climbing roses; the sun splashed through at intervals to brighten the golden patterns of some cobwebs, making them look like delicate Spanish lace; and once more, as on the night when Harry's lips were first unsealed, the world was flooded with the glory of love.

Explanations there had to be, but these mercifully came to an end.

"I'm waiting," said Harry, "to hear you say, word for word, what you told

me the night we were engaged. This is a memory test."

And Sybil, her face glowing with a radiance that was not the reflection from either sun or roses, repeated without a mistake:

"I love you, first and always—better than life itself."

"To-day you proved it when you shouldered my supposed guilt," he told her with a break in his voice. "Wasn't that the test supreme?"

"I don't know," said Sybil quaintly. "Perhaps the test supreme is not a dramatic sacrifice, but something that comes after marriage—in the silly little trials which come in an ordinary day."

Harry's eyes darkened with tenderness. His arms tightened about her, and his lips approached hers.

"I'll always remember that, darling," he whispered. "It's a golden bit of truth."



**R**EAD "LOVE'S BOOMERANG," the story of a real flapper, by Emma S. Forster. It will be published soon in **LOVE STORY MAGAZINE**



# The Wall Between

by Victor Thorne

## THE STORY SO FAR

Norman Dane, actor and producer, selects Marina Fischer, a young widow, to play a small part in "The Besieged City."

She is poverty-stricken, and rejoices in the twenty-five dollars a week promised her. Dane advances her money for board and new clothes and is interested in her baby, Camillia.

When the play opens Marina receives favorable press notices and is asked to call at the office of another producer. She tells Dane, who advises her to go for the interview.

## CHAPTER VII.

MARINA was a practical little body. She had learned from experience not to cross bridges until she came to them—not to expend her energies anticipating trouble. Often she had fretted and worried about impending catastrophes—only to be miraculously rescued at the last moment. In learning not to make herself utterly miserable over threatened calamities, she learned likewise not to be too much buoyed up over promised good fortune.

The other women in the dressing room predicted that Parker would offer her a fine part with more money. Their imaginations took wing. They

began to see in Marina a great actress, to be developed by Parker's master hand. They saw her already heading her own company on Broadway. They saw her name up in electric lights.

Marina laughed at them with twinkling eyes and flashing, white teeth. She felt no divine stirring within her. She had no illusions about her ability.

Accordingly, she arrayed herself without any excitement upon the following afternoon. She declined the offer of furs and jewelry that the two women in the dressing room kindly urged upon her. She wore her blue suit and her blue hat—her usual theater costume—and she carried Camillia, of course.

As she entered Parker's office, there was nothing about her to distinguish her from the score of other young women who were waiting there—unless it was Camillia in her fuzzy, white cap and cream-colored coat.

Marina informed the office attendant on the other side of the railing that she had an appointment with Mr. Parker for three o'clock, and that her

name was Marina Fischer. The office attendant looked the matter up on his pad, found that she had stated the facts correctly, and telephoned in to the inner office that Miss Fischer had come. Word came forth that she was to wait a few moments. Marina sat down, and fell to studying the others who were intently studying her.

The elderly woman in the next chair made friends with Camillia, and so won her way into Marina's good graces. She remarked that Marina was lucky to have an appointment. She said that she had been waiting for three days in that very chair—leaving it only at meal times and when the office closed—waiting just on the chance that Parker would have a moment to give her. She begged Marina to mention her name if the opportunity arose.

Marina promised. The eyes of the elderly woman told her that the deed would be a worthy one.

Presently, while they were in the midst of a discussion concerning Camillia's age and her size and her claims to beauty, the office attendant called: "Miss Fischer!" Marina realized that her turn had come.

With Camillia upon her arm, she proceeded past the gatekeeper, who zealously stood guard, into the sanctum of the great man.

In a pleasantly shadowy room of luxuriant fittings, he sat writing behind a great, carved desk.

There was something churchlike in the atmosphere of the room, something ministerial, too, in the air of the man as he slowly raised his head and studied her out of sharp, dark eyes.

"Ah! Miss Fischer," he said, nodding, and waving his hand toward the consultation seat at the side of his desk.

"Mrs. Fischer, if you please," said Marina. "Unless you refer to my daughter?"

Her eyes twinkled as she nodded at Camillia, and his eyebrows went up.

"Really?" he cried. "The baby in the play is really yours, then?"

"Oh, yes!" answered Marina proudly. "All mine!"

She sat down and placed Camillia on her knee. Parker sat looking at her with great, thoughtful eyes. For a moment or two, he studied Camillia. Then he turned his attention to Marina. She waited patiently.

"Is your husband living, Mrs. Fischer?" asked the old man, at last, leaning back in his chair and fitting his fingers together.

"No," said Marina.

"I have had experience enough with the husbands of my actresses," said Parker. "How long have you been on the stage?"

"This is my first engagement—with Mr. Dane."

"I fancied so. Have you a contract with him?"

"No."

"But you have some sort of understanding?"

"Yes. I said I would stay two weeks longer."

"I see. How much are you receiving for the admirable little 'bit' you do?"

"Twenty-five dollars a week."

"I supposed it would be about that." He nodded. He picked up a paper that was lying on his desk and examined it, adjusting black-rimmed glasses as he did so.

"I have here," he said then, "a contract running ten years. For the first year, it calls for thirty-five dollars a week; the second year, fifty; the third year, one hundred; the fourth year, one hundred and fifty; the fifth year, two hundred and fifty. It binds me to feature you in a production on or before October 20, 1930! That is five years from to-day. It binds me to star you before October, 1932. And for the second five years of your contract, it gives you five hundred dollars a week and three per cent of the gross receipts.

It guarantees you, for the next ten years, twenty weeks of salary each year."

Marina was staring, wide-eyed. She leaned forward as he stopped speaking, and seized hold of the edge of the desk. She drew in her breath sharply.

"It's—for me—that contract?" she gasped. "You're offering it to me?"

"Yes," he answered quietly, looking up at her. "But I have not explained the conditions. I am to select the plays in which you appear, and the actors and actresses who surround you. I am to cast the plays. I am to select scenery and costumes. I am to approve every costume you wear. I am to approve every interview or article that you give to the press. You are to agree not to marry during the life of this contract!"

Marina nodded.

"That is fair enough. Is that all of it?" she asked.

"That is all."

"But how do you know that I can act? You have not tried me!"

"I can teach you to act," he answered. "I am so sure of that that I am ready to sign, now, if you are. Do you want to read this over first, for yourself?"

He extended the contract toward her.

"Yes—I should like to—if I might," said Marina.

He nodded benignantly.

"Read," he said. "I will wait."

"Oh, no! I read English so slowly. And you are busy. There are so many waiting out there!"

"No one that is important," said Parker.

"I can come to-morrow! I can then have time to read slowly and to think!"

He regarded her.

"To think? To think of what?"

"Of whether it would be fair to you to sign this," said Marina, flashing him a dazzling smile.

"Let me be the judge of that!"

"May I not have the night to think it over?" she asked seriously. "You

have taken me by surprise. You require me to change my plans for the future and to adjust myself to new conditions all in a moment. I am confused. I am not a business woman—not a show woman. I have never attempted to earn my living until lately. Please give me just to-night to make this momentous decision?"

He yielded, but reluctantly.

"Very well. You may have to-night to think it over, though I shall have to rearrange my morning program to see you to-morrow."

He drew a desk pad toward him and reflected over it, frowningly, his pen against his lips.

"I will make it—eleven," he said. "To-morrow at eleven. I can give you just fifteen minutes, but that will be long enough to settle this matter."

He nodded and rose.

"Thank you," said Marina. "Ten minutes to-morrow will be ample. Or I can sign the contract at home, for that matter. With the rest of my fifteen minutes, won't you see an elderly lady who has been waiting for three days, and who needs to see you? She asked me to speak for her, and she looks as if—it would mean so much!"

Parker frowned.

"Who is the lady?" he asked.

"Katherine Jason!"

"I never heard of her."

"She has been waiting three days, from the time your office has opened until the closing hour."

"But, my dear Mrs. Fischer, my time is valuable. I can't possibly see every one who comes to me seeking employment!"

"Not every one!" agreed Marina. "Just this one! She has had five children and has lost them all. Think of it! Two were babies and three grew up to be just old enough to talk. Her husband is dead. She is so old and lonely looking!"

He sighed.

"Send her in when you go out," he said in a martyred voice. "I will see her for a moment."

"Oh, thank you!" cried Marina happily. "Thank you!" Before he knew what was happening, she had wrung his hand and had gone.

Outside, she told the good news to the waiting old lady. Then she went homeward.

That Dane would let her accept it—would urge her to sign it, in fact—she never doubted. It was such a wonderful document—beginning at once to pay her thirty-five dollars a week, and in six years yielding her five hundred and a percentage. Five hundred dollars a week!

It was almost too much to grasp!

It promised every conceivable advantage for Camillia. As for the conditions—what did they amount to? Who was she to select her own plays or her costumes or the actors and actresses for her company? Far better to let him do it. As for marrying again—Well, that was the last thing she expected to do, anyway.

It was very hard to wait from four o'clock until six, for the careful reading over of the contract took almost no time. She walked the floor of her bedroom at Mrs. Waterman's and talked aloud to the delighted Camillia.

Marina looked about her and disdained the room that had seemed little less than paradise to her only three weeks before.

"We shall no longer be walled up in one room, Camillia!" she announced proudly. "We shall have a house! And a garden! And a motor car like Mr. Dane's, so that Camillia can go with Marina! Camillia will have new dresses and bonnets and booties—by hundred thousands! And such dolls! As she grows older, she shall have music lessons, and French lessons, and singing lessons, and German lessons, and dancing lessons, and lessons in deportment!"

She stopped suddenly in her wild dreaming and laughed, and looked at the contract again.

She knelt down beside Camillia.

"He was quite mad to have it made out for me so," she said with a shake of her dark head. "Quite, quite mad! May Heaven not let him recover until after to-morrow! I should have signed it then and there! Merciful heavens, Camillia, if he should change his mind!"

She looked at the clock and wished that she had agreed to meet Parker again directly after dinner, and wondered if a contract was binding even after one of the parties to it discovered he had made a big mistake in signing!

She supposed she would have to release him, anyway, when he came to find out that she knew absolutely nothing about acting! Of course, she could not compel him to pay her all that money! Or even if the law gave her the right, she couldn't take advantage!

That realization saddened her and sobered her from the intoxication of her daydreams. She knelt beside the bed, and threw her arms around Camillia hungrily and cried:

"Oh, if it only could be true! If it only could be true!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

Dane, when he came, found her calmer. She had heard his car stop at the door, because she had been hovering near the window to watch and listen. She had heard his ring at the bell, because she had left her door wide open for that purpose.

She shouted down to the maid, before that lady could get halfway up the first flight, that she would be down at once. Even as she called, she began to descend.

They got into Dane's car, after a casual greeting. When he had given the man his own address, he leaned back to study her with appraising eyes.

"I'm dining you at my own place," he said, "because I thought you wouldn't care to have the baby in a public café. She'll be chaperon enough if one is needed."

"Chaperon?" repeated Marina, laughing. "Ah, no! I shall be pleased to see where you live. It will be nice to go alone with Camillia. I have always been a poor girl, and poor girls do not need chaperons."

He laughed, amazed to learn that she actually had dimples.

"Only rich girls require chaperons," said Marina, showing her white teeth between her scarlet, parted lips. "That is why Camillia will require a chaperon. Camillia is going to be a rich girl!"

"So?"

He waited, recognizing in this an approach to the subject uppermost in both their minds.

"What do you think of this?" she asked, suddenly producing the contract and flashing it before him.

"A contract?" he asked.

"Indeed, yes," said Marina.

"Signed?"

"Oh, no—not yet!"

He took it and unfolded it. She leaned back, watching eagerly as he read. Her dark eyes studied his face for the first signs of astonishment and delight. She had no doubt that he would rejoice with her over this good luck. It did not occur to her that he would look at the matter from any point of view but hers.

Once he looked up gravely, and she wet her lips to question, but he had begun to read again before she could speak. She held her silence until they reached their destination.

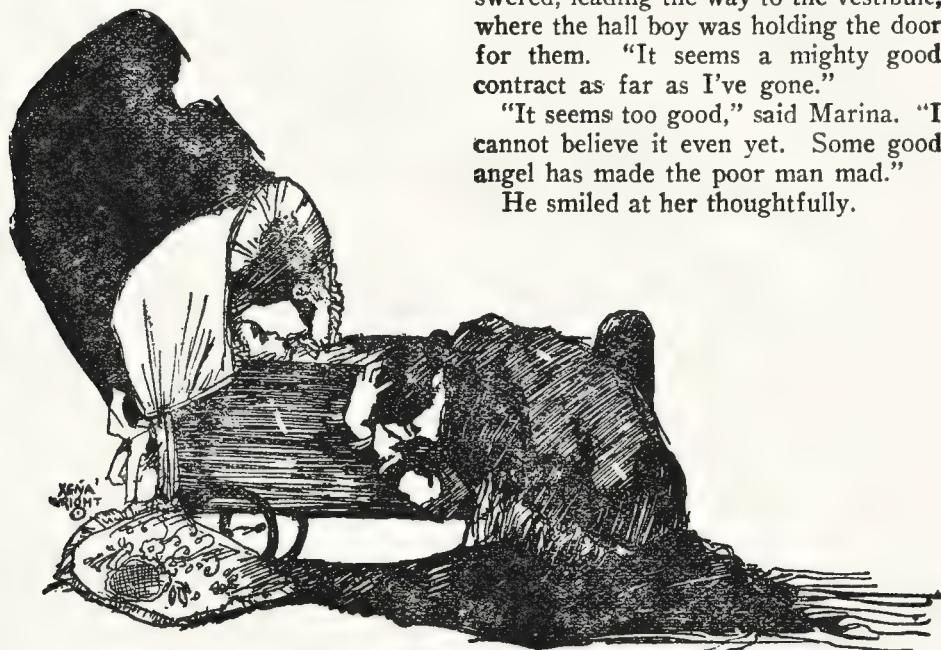
He had not yet finished even then, but she could suppress her eagerness and curiosity no longer.

"What do you think of it, eh?" she cried, as she descended with the aid of his helping hand.

"I haven't quite finished," he answered, leading the way to the vestibule, where the hall boy was holding the door for them. "It seems a mighty good contract as far as I've gone."

"It seems too good," said Marina. "I cannot believe it even yet. Some good angel has made the poor man mad."

He smiled at her thoughtfully.



"He was quite mad to have it made out for me so," Marina said, with a shake of her dark head. "Quite, quite mad."

"Oh, no—he is not mad. Parker is the cannier producer in the business. He is as far-sighted as it is given to mortals to be. He evidently sees great possibilities in you, or he would never have offered you such terms as these!"

The elevator descended and they entered it.

"But I know nothing about acting!" protested Marina.

"He feels that he can teach you, then."

"That is what he said."

"He feels that you have it in you—the divine spark!"

Marina laughed and shrugged her shoulders.

"It must be a very little spark," she said. "I have never felt it in me. It has not yet kept me warm on a cold day!"

He smiled. They left the elevator at his floor and he opened the door with his latchkey.

His man stood just inside, bowing at the entrance to the dining room, and announcing, as he came forward to take Dane's hat and topcoat:

"Dinner is served, sir!"

The air of the rooms delighted Marina. She looked about with wondering eyes, at the wall finishings, the hangings, the thick silken rugs, the chairs and tables, the pictures and light fixtures. She sniffed in the fragrance of fresh-cut flowers.

"How lovely!" she cried. "It is like the palace of a king! I shall have such a house, one day, for Camillia to grow up in. It is wonderful!"

"Everything for Camillia," he said gently, holding out his arms. "Let me hold her until you take off your things!"

She relinquished her, smilingly.

"Can you hold her?"

"Indeed I can."

"You have perhaps babies of your own?"

It was the first time she had thought of him in that respect. She had looked

upon him until now as a star, a famous actor, a creature of the theater. That he was a man, too, had not occurred to her. She had never thought to ask if he had a wife and little ones of his own.

"No," he answered slowly, "I have never married!"

"You should have," said Marina, "you should have. Then you would not say 'everything for Camillia' as though it were strange. You would know—if you had ever had a child of your own—that parents cease to live for themselves when babies come. They no longer count. I have fulfilled my mission in life when I gave birth to Camillia. Or the greater part of it, at least. I must still rear her. But I am a dowager queen, now, whose reign is ended, and whose hopes are all in the next-of-kin."

He gave the baby back into her eager arms and shook his head.

"Nonsense! You are much too young to abdicate yet. How old are you?"

"Twenty-two!"

"You are scarcely a woman, yet."

"I have been a woman for nine long months," said Marina.

He lead the way to the dining-room door, carrying the contract with him. The manservant held up the table portion of a child's high chair for her, so that she could deposit Camillia therein.

"What's this?" she cried, startled. "For Camillia?"

"No one else," answered Dane, smiling.

"You have bought it just for her—just for this one meal?"

"I am hoping to be honored with her company more than once."

She put the baby in. Camillia smiled, pleased with her new surroundings, and reached out toward the silver before her. Marina turned to Dane.

"What shall I say to you?" she asked.

"You are more than good. There is no word in English that I know, and that will serve me!"

"I am selfish," he answered. "I wanted you to be relieved of holding the baby so that we could talk in peace."

"Yes," she said, "you are very selfish!"

She sat down opposite him and next to Camillia, shaking her head.

He laid the contract beside his plate.

"May I—finish?" he asked.

"Yes—do!"

"Serve us, Rawlins," said Dane, and resumed his reading.

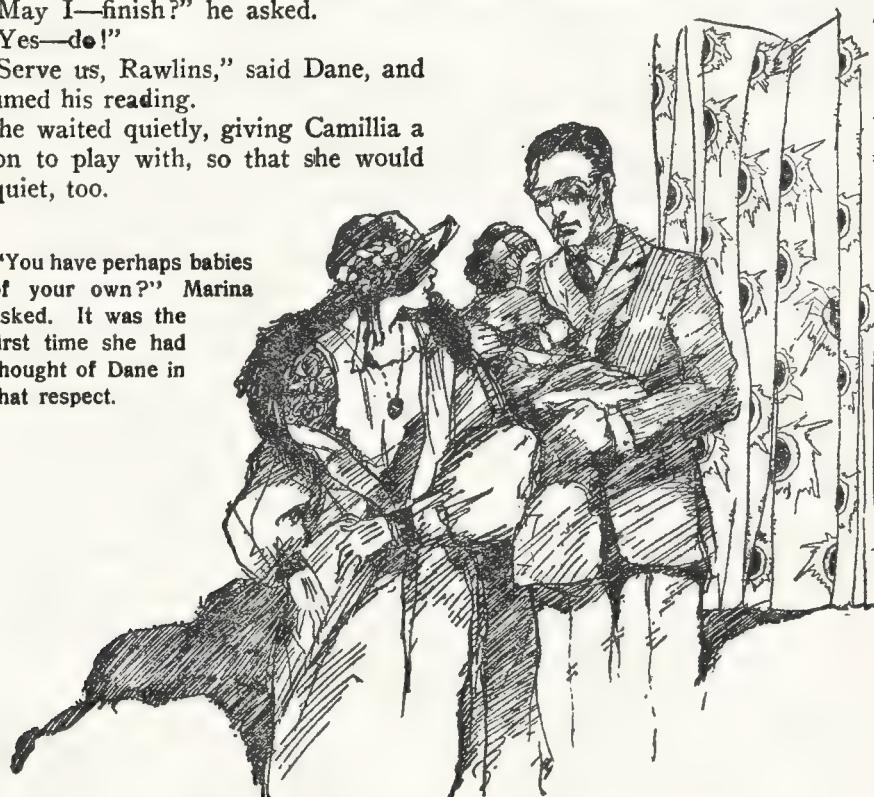
She waited quietly, giving Camillia a spoon to play with, so that she would be quiet, too.

"You have perhaps babies of your own?" Marina asked. It was the first time she had thought of Dane in that respect.

more attractive. I will make the same terms with you that Parker offers, and I will not insist upon your remaining a widow!"

Marina looked at him in startled wonder.

"What? You will make a contract with me like this?"



"Well?" he said finally, as he mastered the final details and looked up. "I think it is very good. And you?"

"I have told you," said Marina. "I think he must be quite mad."

"You will sign this, if I release you?"

"Sign it?" Her dark eyes opened wide. "Indeed I will sign it! I will sign it twice!"

"His conditions do not annoy you?"

"Oh, no! He prevents my doing only what I do not want to do!"

"Still," he said slowly, "the same contract with one condition less might prove

"Yes."

"It is foolishness! I cannot act. You will be throwing away your good money!"

"Did you say all this to Parker?"

"No, indeed! But you are my friend. He is not. What he does is no concern of mine."

"But what I do—that is some concern of yours. Is that right?"

"Surely. You have done wonderful things for me. Do you think I have no gratitude within me? Do you think I forget so swiftly?"

"No," he answered.

"The welfare of my friends is my welfare," said Marina. "From this Parker I take what I can get. It is business, is it not?"

"Suppose it is a question of making money for him or for me. Then what?" asked Dane.

"Of making money?" she repeated.

"Suppose you can be trained? Suppose a star can be made of you? Suppose you can be developed into a tremendous success, if properly handled?"

Marina was amazed.

"You believe this?" she asked.

"Yes."

"But why? Why?"

"I can't explain it. There's something about you that suggests it. You have magnetism. I remarked that from the first. If you will work hard and be patient, I know that I can make a great actress of you. I know it! Your voice is extraordinary. I understand that they can hear you plainly in the last row of the top balcony."

"Then, too, you have a good stage presence—now. You hadn't when I first engaged you. But you are fattening up. You have sympathy, comprehension and intelligence. And, as I say, the other thing—call it what you like—that enables you to get over the footlights! I know I can make a star of you as well as Parker can!"

She drew a long breath.

"How wonderful!" she cried. "It isn't all a wild dream? I can earn all this money, really?"

"Yes."

He was astounded that even the glamour of stellar honors did not dazzle her. She took no thought of her own aggrandizement. She was thinking only of Camillia's future.

"Then, of course, I would prefer to stay under your management," she said frankly.

"I haven't the reputation that Parker has, I warn you. I am the only star

that I have ever made. But I understand the art of acting and I know I can teach it to you. Perhaps I can make up in expression and naturalness and realism what I lack in stagecraft."

She shrugged.

"I much prefer to be with you," she assured him. "I would even come to you for much less money."

"No. I will make the same terms with you that he is willing to make. That is only fair."

She came to a sudden decision, her dark eyes lighting.

"Very well!" she cried. "It shall be as you say. If you find out afterward that you cannot make a great actress of me—that you cannot make me a money-making proposition—the contract will be void, eh?"

He shrugged.

"Very well," he agreed.

She raised her water goblet to the level of her great eyes and brandished it aloft between them.

"To our new arrangement," she said, "and to our success—yours and mine—and Camillia's!"

He clinked his water glass with hers, and they drank quite seriously. Camillia, from her high chair, crowed with glee.

"You'll go to Parker in the morning and tell him?" suggested Dane.

"Yes, at eleven!"

"From there, then, you can come to the office, and I'll see that our contract is ready for your signature."

She nodded, thoroughly pleased with the course of events. There came a twinkle into her eyes, the corners of her mouth drew down and her dimples showed.

"If I could have guessed, a few weeks ago, how two famous American managers were to seek my services—how they were to offer me inducements such as these"—her hand fell to the contract beside him—"I should have found it hard to believe. No one in

my family has ever acted. I have never even known any one of the stage. Even now, I can hardly believe that this wonderfully lucky person sitting 'here is Marina—the same Marina who sat so many hours each day in that hideous little room on Seventeenth Street, talking with Camillia and sewing—sewing—sewing—until her poor back ached and her fingers were numb with pain and her eyes smarted from watching the stitches.

"I tell you," she continued, "there were nights when I cried myself to sleep from utter weariness. There were nights when—but for Camillia—I would have killed myself, just to end the dreariness, the drudgery and the everlasting worry and suspense. For myself I did not care. It was just for Camillia's sake I endured it. She had a right to her life. I might take mine. That was my own affair and the good God's. But Camillia! I could not rob her of anything that life might mean! So I had to live on to look out for her! I would not abandon her, as so many mothers would have done, for her sake and theirs."

"And yet," Dane pointed out, "you could have found employment more easily if you had left her, couldn't you?"

"Oh, yes. A woman alone need never starve! It was having her to look out for, too, that made things so hard for me. That is the strange part of it. I would rather have died than have lost her. She was mine. She was flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone! She was some one who belonged to me, who had a claim upon me. I was not utterly alone in the big world while I had her. Little, silent and helpless as she was, it was she who made me strong enough to live through the months of agony after Emil went and I was left behind."

He nodded understandingly.

"Your very burdens were your blessings!" he said.

"That was it. She was a burden, but she was a blessing! In the blackest days, just the little soft body in my arms made up for everything. I would reach out to her, and her little, helpless fingers would fasten round mine. Strength and courage and—yes, happiness, too—would course through my veins. When you are weak and some one leans upon you, it makes you strong again."

He sat listening with bowed head, his eyes fixed upon the gleaming silver before him. His fingers mechanically moved a fork about on the shining cloth.

"In my depths of despair I had the knowledge," she went on in a low voice, "that I should not die without having known what life can be. I had been a wife. I was a mother. The best that can come to a woman had come to me. I would ask myself if I had the right to complain—if I was justified to complain. I thought of the women who were even more alone and helpless than I. I thought of the women who had grown old childless! I thought of the thousands of women whose hearts had never been stirred by the pressure of a child's head upon their bosoms—by the sound of a strange, small voice trying to utter the mother call.

"I tell you, my pity went out to them. My heart broke for them. In my poverty and wretchedness I knew that there were other women more miserable than I—women who were babyless!"

Dane rose suddenly from his seat and began to pace the floor. She watched him wonderingly. His eyes were afire. He scowled. His jaws were set and their muscles worked.

"What is it?" asked Marina anxiously. "Have I said something that I should not have said?"

"You have said something you were meant to say—something you were destined to say, I think!" he answered swiftly. "You have given me an idea—

an inspiration. I must have a play written for you. A play about motherhood. Not the usual play about a gray-haired old lady in rustling black silks, but a play about young motherhood. It shall be a play about a girl who undertakes the responsibility of motherhood almost without realizing.

"We must draw her portrait vividly—this gay, young thing, thoroughly alive and in love, irresponsible, a little foolish, but gay and charming and sweet—just such a girl as marries and undertakes motherhood by the thousands every year. We must reveal the transition from girlhood to motherhood. We must have the transformation in detail. We show how the baby makes of the jolly, charming useless thing—a mother—a woman of depth and feeling, of insight and knowledge.

"We'll strip her, one by one, of her vanity, her thoughtlessness, her beauty, her health, her youth, her folly and her uselessness. We'll leave her in the end not a brilliant woman, a social success, a genius or a beauty—only a mother. Any one's mother! Such a mother as all of us have had! There must be something about careers in it—something about social life and club life. Then it will be timely as well as true. For the women of to-day need to be reminded of the truth. They have done too much running after false gods."

"It would be a wonderful play," said Marina.

"We must work hard," he cried enthusiastically, "and get you ready to play it by the time it is written. Eldridge must do it, of course—in collaboration with us. We'll help."

"But I know nothing about writing plays!" said Marina protestingly.

"Maybe not—but you know a lot about motherhood."

"Oh, yes—of that I know a great deal."

He came to stand over her appraisingly.

"You are still slim and straight and girlish," he said. "You can carry gowns. In the first part, you must be a single girl, of course."

"If I am to be gay and charming and irresponsible again," said she, "I must learn to act first. I can no longer feel like that!"

"You'll learn to act!" he assured her. "I'll teach you fast enough!"

Rawlins appeared in the doorway hesitatingly.

"The car is waiting, sir," he said.

"Good Lord! Yes. I should hope so!" gasped Dane, looking at his watch. "We must start at once, Mrs. Fischer, if you please!"

"I shall be ready in no time," she answered.

Rawlins brought her hat and coat as she lifted Camillia out of the high chair.

"There's a mirror over there," said Dane.

"I can get on without it," smiled Marina. "So!"

She stuck her hat upon her head.

"I am no longer out for conquest!" she said grimly. "I leave that sort of thing for my daughter, eh? You have not noticed how she flirts?"

"She has a way of looking at me sidewise," admitted Dane.

"Please to hold her until I get into my coat?"

"Surely!"

He took Camillia and Rawlins held the coat.

"Although I really shouldn't," said Dane slowly. "Babies are such wonderful things. You'll have me rushing off to adopt one—just to cheer up my rooms and sit opposite me at meal times, and for me to—leave my money to."

"Marry and have one of your own," advised Marina, taking Camillia rather hastily. "It's much more satisfactory."

"I suppose so." He sighed as he led the way toward the elevator.

She wondered idly if he had had some unhappy love affair—or if he simply hadn't found The Woman. He was wealthy enough to marry, certainly. He was old enough to think about settling down. He was surely attractive enough. He was big and strong and kindly. He had a fine face. It occurred to her that many women must have fancied him. Now that she thought of it, it was odd that he hadn't been captured.

They were both silent on the drive back to the theater. They were both absorbed in thought.

#### CHAPTER IX.

Marina gave Parker the surprise of his life the following morning at eleven, when she was ushered into the inner office. He was standing at the window with his back to her, his eyes fastened upon the street below. For a moment or two he did not turn.

Marina waited quietly, her keen eyes wandering about the gorgeously furnished room.

"Well," he cried suddenly, turning about and facing her, "I suppose you have come to sign?"

He dispensed with all preliminaries. He wasted no time on greetings.

"No," said Marina, "I've come to tell you that I can't sign your contract."

He was not a tall man, but he loomed over Marina as he advanced a step or two, staring.

"Can't sign?" he repeated ominously. "Why? Do you fancy you can gain anything by holding out?"

"No," said Marina, "but—"

"You must not get the idea into your head that you are invaluable, you know," he went on crossly. "There are dozens of women on the stage who reveal just as much promise as you do. Any of them would probably jump at the chance to sign the contract I offered you. You've no experience. You've no reputation—no name. What

is it that you don't like about the contract—the clause that prohibits your marrying again?"

"No," said Marina, "I don't mind that. I—"

"The thirty-five dollars a week at the start?"

"No."

She had decided to wait until he was through before making her explanation.

"What then? Speak up, please! I am a very busy man. This matter is only one of many upon which I am engaged!"

Marina rose, transferring Camillia from her lap to her arm.

"I can't sign your contract," said she frankly, "because I am going to sign practically the same contract with Mr. Dane!"

"What?" roared Parker, hardly crediting what he heard.

"He doesn't want to release me," explained Marina.

"You told him of my offer?" asked Parker angrily.

"I showed him the contract."

"How dared you do such an underhanded thing?"

"Underhanded?" repeated Marina indignantly. "It would have been underhanded if I had left him without first warning him and showing him the contract. He gave me my start. You would never have heard of me if it hadn't been for him. He picked me out from among a lot of extra people and gave me a few lines to speak. He gave me my chance, and he did it when I needed help badly—when I was at the end of my resources! Do you think for one moment I'd consider leaving him, so long as he wanted me to remain?"

Parker lowered his tone a little as he discovered her quite capable of raising hers.

"But he'd never have offered you such a contract if you had not shown him mine," he pointed out grimly.

"Then I have to thank you for

bringing it all about," said Marina, suddenly showing her teeth in a dazzling smile.

He stood motionless, observing her. His heavy brows came down, low over his remarkable eyes.

"How are you going to repay me for that kindness, then?" he asked.

Marina shrugged.

"How can I repay you?"

"By coming to me at once, if ever you should leave Dane. I've got a play in my safe for you. It'll stay there until I can get you—one year—five years—ten years. Do you understand? You have only to send in your name at any time with the message, 'ready to talk business,' and I'll see you."

Marina drew a long breath, her eyes brightened and she held out her hand to him.

"Thank you," she said. "I shall remember. Good-by."

"Good-by," said Parker, shaking hands.

So she went out of his office, leaving him staring after her and sighing over the collapse of a dream. He had seen great possibilities in her. He had seen not only the chance to recoup his failing fortunes, but a chance to restore his waning fame—to regain some of the glory that he was losing.

Once his name had stood for mastery of stagecraft. He had seen in an arrangement with Marina his chance to come back. He sensed in her the essential thing that is born in a woman and that cannot be counterfeited—the one thing he could not bestow—the ability to feel and to express what she felt by means of a glance, an expression, an inflection, a sigh, a shrug or a gesture.

He could supply the setting. He could supply the play, the lines, the costumes, the lights and the other characters best suited to contrast. He could even teach her technique. But he could not teach any one to feel and to express what she felt. He could not give any

one sympathy, understanding or sensitive perception.

He was only mortal, after all, and not the wizard that he had once seemed.

Dane had spent the morning with Eldridge making plans for Marina's play. When he got an idea into his head he always acted upon it at once. So even before Marina's contract was signed, he had agreed with Eldridge upon the scheme of the play and had sent Eldridge off to work upon the plot outline.

When Marina had come to sign and had gone again, Dane went into consultation with Andrews, his manager. Andrews had never favored the production of "The Besieged City." He had objected as strenuously as he dared object to anything his biggest star wanted to do, and had yielded only because he had realized that further protest was useless. After the first week he had done his best to prevail upon Dane to have a "breakdown" and close the show.

"It'll never go," he had urged, walking the floor and gesticulating wildly. "The public doesn't want any more war. It had war dished up in the newspapers and magazines until it's sick of the very name. It's had to pay higher taxes on account of war. It's had to meet increased cost of living on account of war. It's been put to no end of inconvenience, and a large part of it has suffered the loss of friends or relatives.

"People want to get away from war. They want to think of something else. That's one good reason why they won't come to see your play. Even your name can't draw 'em.

"Then, besides, your confounded play points a moral, and people don't want to be preached at when they go out for an evening's recreation and spend two dollars apiece for seats. They don't want to see a lot of half-starved, ragged, armless, legless soldiers



"It'll never go," he had urged, walking the floor and gesticulating wildly.  
"The public doesn't want any more war."

defending a canvas wall with prop guns and blank cartridges. They don't like you in a dirty uniform. They don't like you killed at the end. They like you nice and clean, lording it over every one else in the play and winning the girl in the end.

"They'll stand for you in Shakespeare now and then because it's smart and intellectual. But they don't want any modern plays of the Shakespeare type. You couldn't even fill a small house with this thing—let alone the big place you've got."

All these arguments, repeated constantly, had failed to convince Dane, however.

"Let us lose money for one season, then, and do something we like—some-

thing we're proud of doing," he had answered. "I can afford it and so can you!"

Now, however, he changed his tune. To the everlasting amazement of Andrews, it was Dane, himself, who reopened the discussion and offered the terms of his surrender.

"I'll close 'The Besieged City' at the end of the week if you can find me something else to put into rehearsal at once," he said, when he had parted from Marina and had gone into his manager's private office.

Andrews did not ask the why or wherefore.

"Done!" he cried. "I'll ship a carload of scripts to your place at once."

"I can't waste time over a carload of

scripts. Send me two or three that you think are all right."

"Of course. That's what I meant. I'll see what Miss Williams has approved."

He reached out and pushed the buzzer that communicated with Miss Williams' office. Her duty, or rather one of her many duties, was the reading of scripts.

"Have you anything on hand that might interest Mr. Dane?" asked Andrews as the reader entered the room. "In the way of a script, I mean."

"Why, yes," answered Miss Williams eagerly. "There's a beautiful little play—a comedy—written by Natalie Pearson. You remember, Mr. Andrews, you paid her for a year's option—and then for a second year's option. That's going to run out soon!"

"Which is it? What's it called?" asked Andrews.

"'The Puppet Show,'" answered Miss Williams. "Of course it's not at all the same sort of play as 'The Sieged City.' It's more like Mr. Dane's other plays. But it is so charming and sweet."

"Drawing-room comedy in which I lord it over everybody else on the stage and win the girl in the end?" asked Dane grimly.

"Ye-es," admitted Miss Williams.

"Send it to my place at once—by messenger," said Dane. "Or, better still, give it to me. I'll take it with me."

"Yes, sir," responded Miss Williams happily. She had always liked "The Puppet Show," and she pitied Miss Pearson, who had waited so long and patiently for her first production.

"Wait a minute!" called Andrews, as she started for the door. "Have you anything else?"

"There's that play you thought of having done over for Mr. Dane and Miss Stillwell—'There Is Always A Way.'"

"Take too long," said Dane. "Besides, I don't want to bother with a co-star just at present. Let me have 'The Puppet Show,' Miss Williams."

"Yes, sir," said the reader, and was gone.

"She's been at me five or six times to have it done," observed Andrews. "Practically made me renew the option last year."

"She thinks so well of this?"

"Says it can't fail with you in it," answered Andrews, shifting his cigar.

"I distrust these plays that 'can't fail,'" said Dane. "As a rule they read well and act badly!"

"Here you are, sir," said Miss Williams, returning with a manuscript covered in rather worn blue.

"Thank you," said Dane, accepting it. Then he opened the covers casually and read: "'The Puppet Show. A Comedy in Four Acts by Natalie Pearson.' Never heard of her, did you?"

He looked up at Andrews.

"Never," answered Andrews.

"She's new," said Miss Williams. "This is her first play. She says she wrote it for you, sir."

"Really?" cried Dane. He looked at the script again. "I don't like plays in four acts, though. Can't it be cut to three?"

"Oh, no, sir. But—read it, please!" urged Miss Williams.

Dane looked across at her with a faint smile.

"You like it?" he asked.

"Yes indeed, sir."

"Why?"

"Because it's human. Because it's real. Because it's funny and sad and sweet and fine and everything! Because it's a splendid play!" said the girl.

Dane smiled.

"So!" he said. "Very well. I'll read it on your recommendation."

"I know you'll like it," said Miss Williams. "I just know you will."

Dane nodded and smiled at her, then at Andrews, and passed off with the script of "The Puppet Show" in his hand.

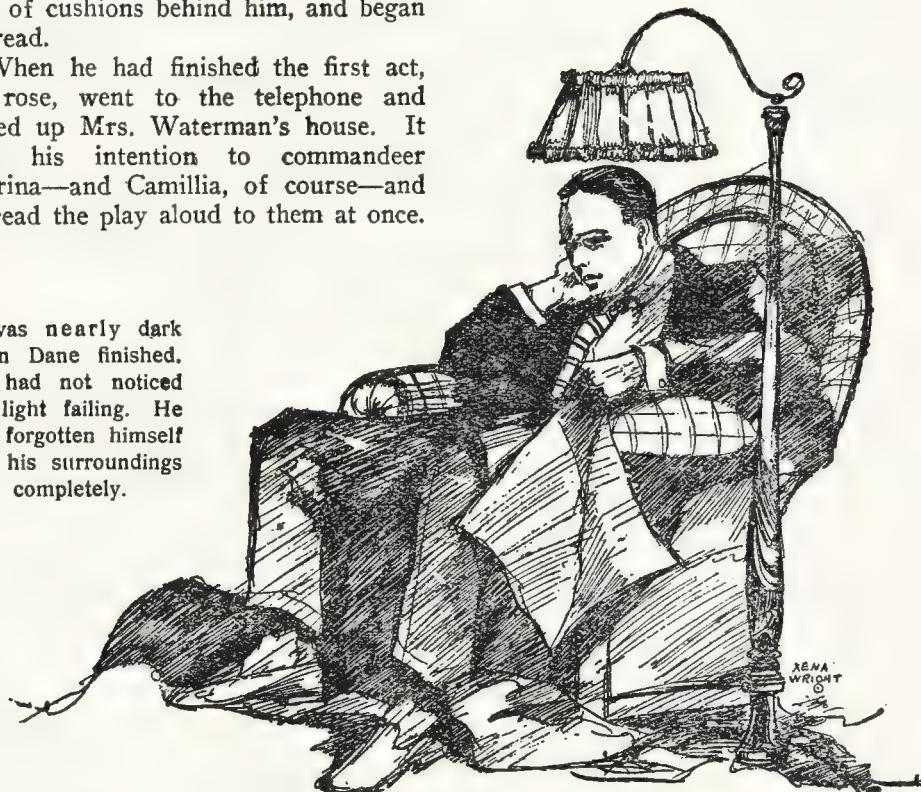
He had the afternoon to himself and nothing more important to do, so he went straight home, threw himself down upon the davenport in the library, with lots of cushions behind him, and began to read.

When he had finished the first act, he rose, went to the telephone and called up Mrs. Waterman's house. It was his intention to commandeer Marina—and Camillia, of course—and to read the play aloud to them at once.

It was nearly dark when Dane finished. He had not noticed the light failing. He had forgotten himself and his surroundings completely.

play. But it was a good situation. The rest of the play was just interesting and fine and pretty and, as Miss Williams had promised, funny and sad. The interest was sustained from start to finish, though.

The story had to deal with an artist



But Marina was out, so the plan had to be abandoned. However, he read the second, third and fourth acts aloud to himself.

It was nearly dark when he finished. He had not noticed the light failing. He had forgotten himself and his surroundings completely—a thing that had never happened to him before in the reading of a play.

Yet, when he came to analyze it, there wasn't a great deal to it. There was a big scene at the end of the third act—the only really big scene in the

named Bellamy who befriended a little girl named Jane. She lived upstairs and was the daughter of another artist. She was her father's housekeeper and companion, although only eleven years old.

She was a bright child.

Her father dies. Bellamy suggests that she come and live with him—for she has been left destitute. Jane, however, is an old-fashioned little thing and she says, "it won't look right." Bellamy suggests sending her to boarding school. She demurs. "Go," he says jestingly,

"and when you are old enough and thoroughly educated, I'll marry you. That'll be all right, won't it?"

"Yes," says Jane, relieved.

She goes away. Bellamy meets a woman nearer his own age, becomes infatuated and marries. Jane hears nothing of it, however, until she returns with her trousseau on her seventeenth birthday. This was the third-act situation.

There was a touch of tragedy near the end, playing up Jane's refusal to let him divorce his wife for her, in spite of her knowledge that he married un-

happily. But the wife elopes, giving a happy ending to the play.

As he dined that night, Dane reread bits of Jane's speeches and saw Marina in them. He made notes in pencil. He wrote the names of various actors and actresses next to the characters he thought they could play.

When he went to the theater that night, he had the notice posted that foretold the end of "The Besieged City," and he gave Marina the new manuscript so that she might read her new part.



### FAINT REVENGE!

LEAVE me my dreams and my memories! Realities fade with the days!  
We turn to sleep, and die till dawn—tossed in a restless maze.  
But dreams will linger, as burnished dusk clings to a hilltop fair;  
As memories crowd to a waiting heart; but oh, you are not there!

You are not there to watch with me, as the last of the gold-red glow  
Fades to the gray and the black again. You are not there to know  
Sorrow and longing, and heartache, too; when the first star throws its light  
Through a million miles, to a heedless world—gentle, timidly, bright.

But leave me my dreams and my memories! I'll watch on our hill alone,  
Till a thousand stars light our trysting place! How long since you have known  
What fairies dance in that faint, far glow; what dreams almost came true?  
Ah, dreams still live on that starlit hill—but, alas! they're not of you!

AMY RANN BRADLEY.

# *Sally of His Heart*

*By*

*Mrs. Harry Pugh Smith*



**S**ALLY! Sally! Sally in our al-ley!" sang out a shrill and mocking voice.

"Father, dear father, come home with me now!" taunted another.

"Don't drink, my boy, to-night!" mimicked a third.

In the center of half dozen jeering young hoodlums stood a ragged, disheveled young creature with a pinched white face and blue eyes blazing beneath a tangled mop of thick brown hair. Like a young wild cat, encircled by her enemies, she stood at bay, panting, trembling, yet facing her tormentors bravely, fearlessly. Sally was old Michael Poole's grandchild. This in itself was enough to warrant unpopularity, for half the time he lay drunk in the gutter, and became the target for a great amount of banter and ridicule. Sally became fine sport for the young ragamuffins in the hollow—they made her life, wretched as it was at best, more miserable still with their taunts.

Monmouth Drive, the most exclusive residential street in the city with its rows of stone and brick houses, each formally laid out and landscaped with shrubbery and flowers, drives, and walks, was a thing of elegance and

beauty. It represented a proud display of wealth and luxury. Just back of all this, in a little hollow, was a down-at-the-heel little neighborhood of shot gun houses known as "Who'd Have Thought It." All the houses were built nearly alike, each having a bare front yard and a can littered rear. The ill-kept littered streets were infested with ragged children and slattern women, lean dogs and lame cats.

To the aristocratic elegance of Monmouth Drive "Who'd Have Thought It" was a perpetual eyesore, a continual thorn in the flesh. Even its name was obnoxious. Other names, more pleasing to the ear, had been applied by successive city councils to the hollow and its denizens, but somehow the old name stuck. Every means had been employed by the offended householders on the Drive to do away with their undesirable neighbors at the rear but without success. The property belonged to old Belfast, connected with the Belfast Iron Works, a grim, ragged foundry situated at the foot of the valley.

Because nearly everyone in the hollow was employed at the works, it had not been possible to induce old Belfast at any price to part with his un-

lovely holdings. Indeed it was rumored that the old ironmonger, who had risen himself from the very dregs of society, rather enjoyed the exasperation his unprepossessing property excited in the breasts of the high-minded people on the Drive.

It was even whispered that he encouraged the continuous warfare which was waged between his employees and their aristocratic neighbors. However that may be, the feud continued. Brickbats, tin cans, and stones were the weapons of offense in the hollow, while police courts, fines and peace bonds the instruments of retaliation on the Drive.

Even in the hollow, however, there were varying degrees of society, and at the very lowest point in the scale was old Michael Poole and his orphaned grandchild, Sally. Michael was old and sodden with drink. When he was sober he worked at the foundry, but he was seldom sober. Drunk or sober, however, he was always good to Sally, his orphaned grandchild. They were miserably poor, and their little shanty was the barest and most disheveled in the hollow. Sally did the best she could but was little more than just a child. Not having any mother to help her, she was usually the dirtiest and most ragged of her playmates. She was thin, almost scrawny, and with her mop of tangled brown hair and blue eyes, left an indelible impression.

Life, the fierce, bitter struggle for existence, had sharpened her wits and her tongue. She was a half-wild little creature, suspicious of every one and everything. It was little wonder considering the way in which she was treated. The young scamps of the neighborhood dubbed her "The Old Drunk's Child," "Sally in Our Alley," and were continually railing her with "Father, dear father, come home with me now," referring to the many times Sally had had to coax and wheedle her

miserable old grandfather away from the corner saloon. This crude and heartless wit never failed to get a rise out of the poor, badgered young thing, who loved her wretched old grandfather despite his sodden weakness and was always ready to scratch and claw his offenders, and put up a fight of defense.

Edging slowly down the street one particular afternoon, boldly facing her enemies, Sally made sharp returns to the cruel taunts of her persecutors. Her bitter little tongue spitting defiance, and her eyes snapping, she sought desperately some avenue of escape. Step by step she withdrew toward a narrow break in the street, a half block away, to a little tangled path, leading downward through a bit of marsh to the river. This was her only means of escape. Sally knew every inch of the wild deserted swamp land along the river's edge, which was a point in her favor.

"Sally in our alley! Sally in our alley!" sang out a shrill, young voice.

Sally stiffened. Her blue eyes shot defiance. Her enemies edged closer.

"Father, dear father—" began another but with a little sob of panting fury Sally's brown hand darted out, a stone hurtled through the air, and landed neatly on the speaker's chin.

Instantly pandemonium broke loose. A clod of soft mud spattered against Sally's cheek. Brick bats whistled through the air. Sally took to her heels. Frantically she sought to reach the break in the street which led to the river and safety but her enemies forestalled her. She was surrounded. Sally shrank back against the fence, covered her face with her thin hands. Cat calls, jeers, taunts maddened her almost beyond endurance. She was trembling violently.

Suddenly, without warning, a new energy injected itself into the game, a red-headed, blue-eyed youngster, gen-

erously endowed with freckles, broke through the circle, striking out right and left. He was a stocky, well-muscled chap and the cowardly young ruffians quailed before his ready fists. Her courage revived by the appearance of this unexpected champion, scratched and clawed and kicked at his side, and together they put the enemy to flight.

Sally was still breathing rapidly and trembling when her rescuer turned and eyed her dubiously. She wasn't exactly a prepossessing-looking young person, to say the least. In the fight her dress had been torn off one shoulder and there were rents in her wrinkled stock-

ings. Her shoes had become unlaced, her hair tangled and one cheek was spattered with mud.

"You're—you're the new boy who's moved in next door?" faltered Sally. Some way for the first time in her life she felt bitterly ashamed of her rags and her dirt. Her cheeks began to burn beneath the lad's grave, steady eyes.

"Yes," nodded his sturdy red head. "I'm Andy—Andrew Bryant."

He held out his hand. Sally colored to the roots of her hair.

"I—I'm Sally Poole," she choked slightly as she took the proffered hand.



He was a stocky, well-muscled chap, and the cowardly young ruffians quailed before his ready fists.

"I—I'm certainly obliged to you for—for helping me," she faltered.

Andy flushed.

"The cowards!" he said hotly. "Think of picking on a little thing like you! A girl too! They ought to be horse-whipped!"

Sympathy was something new in Sally's sordid little life. No one had ever wasted kindness on her. She could have stood anything else save the note of pity in Andy's voice. A great tear welled up in her blue eyes, spilled over, ran slowly down one cheek. Sally had a horror of crying. She never cried. With all their taunts, her persecutors had never drawn a tear from her defiant eyes. She squeezed her hands together and fought miserably to steady her trembling lip.

"Don't cry, Sally." Andy laid an awkward hand on her quivering shoulder. "Nobody's going to bother you any more while I'm here. I'll look out for you. Come on, I'm going to take you to my mother. She'll fix you up.

And Sally, who was half wild and suspicious of every one and every thing, followed meekly.

Mrs. Bryant, a broad, motherly woman with her hair parted in the middle, was her son's ever present help in time of trouble. If she felt any dismay when Andy drew Sally's ragged little figure after him into her spotless kitchen, she gave no indication of it. Tenderly, she fed and comforted the little waif, mended her rags, put her to bed while she washed them, combed out her thick, tangled hair, and sent her home in the twilight clean and patched and fed, a new, strangely subdued Sally, in whose breast there had been kindled a passionate gratitude for Andy Bryant and his mother.

The Bryants were but little better off in the world's possessions than Sally and her grandfather. Mrs. Bryant, being the support of the family, took in washing. Her husband had

not been living since Andy was a baby. She had moved to the hollow because it was convenient to the Drive, where there was always work for a competent laundress. Andy helped before and after school with any odd jobs he could turn his hand to. But if they were poor, they were scrupulously clean. Mrs. Bryant's bare little house shone like a burnished new penny, and Andy's freckled face was always ruddy from generous applications of soap and water. His clothes, while worn and shabby, were neat and clean. Times never grew so hard with the widow and her son that Andy was permitted to miss a day of school, nor household duties neglected.

With the coming of Andy and his mother to the hollow, there came a great change in Sally's life. Mrs. Bryant took a motherly interest in the little waif across the picket fence, taught her to be neat and orderly, helped her about her grandfather's shanty. For the first time in her life Sally's rags were clean and mended, her tangled hair combed, her face and hands kept above reproach. The young hoodlums in the hollow looked upon her in a different light, and began to refrain from tormenting her as they used to do. Andy saw to that, too. He defended her with his sturdy fists. Sally helped, too, by using her teeth and finger nails. Aided thus by each other, they were able to hold their own, and no one molested them. Her grandfather still lay at times drunk in the gutter, but Andy was always there to help her get him home. Things were much better for Sally in countless ways.

The only fly in the ointment of Sally's new happiness was Andy's insistence that she go to school. Andy's soul burned with a pure white flame for education. His mother, pitifully uneducated herself, had fostered it in him from birth. He was shocked at

Sally's ignorance of books, and was determined that she should go to school. But it so happened Sally had had scant use in her short, tumultuous life for schools. She had gone only when the probation officer had happened upon her and taken her bodily. She knew so many delightful hiding places in the hollow and along the tangled banks of the river, that it was seldom she could be found when she chose to be out of the way.

Her experiences at school had not been very pleasant, to say the least. Her old enemies, the hoodlums, had laughed when she entered the room, and stuck out their tongues at her behind the teacher's back. Little girls, at whose pink and white prettiness Sally had gazed wistfully, had drawn their dainty skirts away from her rags. No, Sally was not fond of school. Invariably she had fallen into disgrace. Once she had hurled an ink bottle at one of her ancient persecutors who had drawn her picture behind the teacher's back, and held it up for the room to see. Again she had pushed a little girl off the seat who had turned up her nose at Sally's patched shoes. The teachers did not understand her. They called her "an incorrigible" and even the probation officer wearied of dragging her, against her will, day after day, to school, and finally left her in peace.

But Andy was determined that Sally should go to school. Realizing what he had done for her, Sally would have cut off her arm if Andy wished it. But the new teacher took all the credit for Sally's appearance of her own free will in the hated classroom one morning from which she had so often fled with precipitation. It was a trying day for her, that first day. It was mortifying to be so far behind. She hated to have to sit with the babies. Andy was far beyond her. It hurt her to have to read "The cat is on the mat," and such

things, when she knew she should be reading stories in the big readers. Often the longing came to be out doors skinning up trees that grew along the river bank. Chasing rabbits in the swamp, too, had always been one of her delightful pastimes, and her limbs, unused to confinement, grew cramped and restless. Her head ached and she longed miserably to run away. Still she had given her word to Andy, and Sally never broke her word! So she stuck it out.

That first day was the worst, but the days that followed were none too enjoyable. Sally possessed a quick, alert mind, and to the teacher's surprise progressed rapidly. Andy helped her at night with her lessons. Night after night in Mrs. Bryant's kitchen they bent their heads over their books while Andy's mother ironed. At Christmas to the great delight of all three, Sally was promoted to a higher grade. Her joy in the event was rather pathetic as she came dancing into the Bryant kitchen to tell the good news.

"It's all you and Andy!" she cried impulsively, embracing Mrs. Bryant, tears in her bright blue eyes.

"There, there, now," said Mrs. Bryant, kissing the flushed eager face, "no one's prouder than I am, you can count on that."

The week before Christmas, Andy and Sally had gone to Sally's beloved woods, and gathered armfuls of holly and mistletoe. Andy never lost a chance to turn an honest penny. Times were most difficult that winter. His mother worked terribly hard. Even Andy's boyish eyes could see that she was aging fast, growing, almost daily, more gray and stooped. In the hollow, most of the boys Andy's age were already at work but his mother would never countenance such a suggestion. Her boy was to have his schooling if she had to work her fingers to the bone! And so one cold, blustery af-

ternoon, their arms strung with great wreaths of holly and mistletoe, Andy and Sally trudged from house to house on the Drive, offering their wares for sale.

It began to snow but still they kept on. They were so bent on disposing of their greens before nightfall. At the last and most imposing house on the Drive the door was opened by a tall and pompous butler who eyed them coldly from under bushy eyebrows.

"Christmas greens?" asked Andy, seeking to make his voice very dignified and businesslike.

The butler shook his head impatiently and was on the point of closing the door in their faces, when there was the rush of feet in the hall behind him, imperious little hands pushed his bulky frame aside and in the doorway appeared a most bewilderingly beautiful young creature. A girl, but little younger than Sally, in a frilly white dress, with golden curls and enormous violet eyes, her cheeks all pink and white dimples, smiled and spoke to them. Sally stared at her, open-eyed with astonishment, for she had never seen anything half so lovely. She had never believed in fairies, but a living one before her very eyes was proof.

"Oh! such gorgeous Christmas holly and mistletoe!" cried the imperious little beauty, clapping her hands. "Is it for sale?"

Andy gulped and nodded his head. He seemed suddenly to have been stricken dumb.

"Come in, come right into the drawing-room. I am sure my mother will buy it all for my Christmas dance!"

"But, Miss Vivian, hadn't you better let me—" began the butler, evidently much perturbed at the idea of taking Andy and Sally, shabby, obviously poverty stricken, into the great house, without being announced.

The little beauty stamped her pretty foot.

"Don't bother, Briscom. I shall do as I like."

And without more ado she drew them, holly, mistletoe, and all, after her into a huge, brilliantly lighted room. Sally and Andy had never before seen such luxury. There were frescoed walls, inlaid floors, beautiful pictures, and nice soft carpets. Sally's eyes, cast downward, suddenly became miserably conscious of her worn and muddy boots. What would the handsome, very haughty man think, who stood before the open fire? But her eyes were drawn to a lovely, fair-haired woman in jewels and evening dress reclining on a huge couch. Over her plumed fan she surveyed Sally's shabby figure from head to foot with cold, supercilious eyes, and again Sally felt uncomfortable.

"What is this? Who are these—er—children?" she asked frigidly. "What are you doing with them here, Vivian?"

Sally stiffened instantly, and looked at Andy, thinking he had already planned a way to escape. But Vivian had smiled at them again.

"They have Christmas greens for sale, mother, and I want them."

The man came forward leisurely.

"Certainly you may have the greens, my dear," he said, "but," he frowned slightly, "why bring such—er—persons in here? We have Briscom for that purpose. How much, my young fellow?" he turned rather insolently to Andy.

Andy seemed to have lost his tongue completely and it was Sally who stated the price. The butler, who had followed them anxiously into the room, relieved them of the greens, and, clutching Andy's arm, Sally hurried him out of the room. On the threshold, however, Andy turned and looked wistfully back at the lovely creature who had so unceremoniously ushered them in. But Vivian was busy with



"What is this? Who are these—er—children?" the woman asked frigidly.  
"What are you doing with them here, Vivian?"

the wreaths, and did not glance up. She had already forgotten the great shabby youth who stared at her so wistfully. The mighty door clanged behind the pair from the hollow, and once more they were alone in the gloom of the early winter dusk.

Andy walked homeward like a man in a dream, glancing occasionally back over his shoulder at the great house on the Drive. They paused at the rickety gate where Sally left him. With a sort of solemn hush in his voice, he said suddenly, "Sally, some

day I'm going to marry that girl. She's —she's just like the girl I've dreamed about. And to think I've found her!"

Sally's eyes opened very wide. Had Andy announced he intended to marry a princess she could not have been more surprised. A washer woman's son living in "Who'd Have Thought It" aspiring to one of the darlings of the Drive! She caught her breath. But after all she had boundless faith in Andy. He had said he would do it, and she never once doubted him.

From that day dated Andy's deter-

mination to go to college. From early morning to late at night, every minute he was not in school, he worked at odd jobs, swelling the little fund that was to put him through the university. His mother, already overtaxed, doubled her efforts that she might add to that fund. Together for three years they skimped and saved, half starved themselves, went shabbily dressed, and even at times cold and hungry, but the fund steadily grew, and Andy's heart swelled with pride.

Sally alone knew the impetus which drove Andy on. She alone knew why he yearned so passionately to rise above his humble surroundings. She alone knew how often he passed that last great house on the Drive to gaze wistfully in at the little golden-haired beauty who lived there. She alone knew that next to his heart Andy wore a faded picture of Vivian Hayden, clipped from a newspaper. She was the daughter of a long line of proud and haughty ancestors, and Sally knew what it meant for a boy of his environment to aspire to the hand of a haughty little heiress. For Sally was becoming older and wiser. She knew Andy's inflexible purpose, his indomitable will, and somehow, absurd as it seemed, she never doubted that sooner or later he would accomplish his desire.

At length came Andy's nineteenth birthday and his entrance to the university. It was not far away, and there were interurbans by which the trip could be speedily made, but Andy had no money for frequent trips. So Sally and his mother seldom saw him, and missed him sorely. But they heard from him and how they gloried in his ambition. The first year was hardest, for he was working his way through, and the burden of work weighed on him heavily. He was often lonely and discouraged and heartsick. But his resolution never faltered. Bitterly and doggedly he held on.

And those behind him never faltered. The winter was bitter cold. Mrs. Bryant, old and bent beyond her years, was not so well nor so strong as she had been. No mention was made of this to Andy, however, lest he throw away his precious opportunity and rush home. Sally flung herself into the breach, helped before and after school, ironed far into many nights until her back ached and her feet throbbed, so that the little bit on which Andy counted so anxiously might be forwarded him. Not once did they fail him. And Sally, to please him, persevered with her hated books—slowly and painfully progressing.

So passed three years, and it was Andy's last year at the university. He was no longer lonely and homesick. He had grown into a handsome, powerfully built young athlete, with a shock of burnished auburn hair. The freckles had gone and there was a quiet resolution in his lean face, a grim determination, that gave him an air of distinction and poise uncommon to his age. He made the football team, and became a star. Sally's pride knew no bounds when she read the glowing reports of his prowess on the gridiron. Together she and Mrs. Bryant pored over accounts of Andy's skill, wept a little, and laughed a little—which is the way with loving women.

The decisive game of the season came. The university had only one rival, but it was a formidable one, for the interstate championship. The interest of the football world was centered on the game between these two, to be played on Thanksgiving Day. "As usual," so the newspapers said, "the university is counting on Bryant, its mighty full back, for a win. They expect Bryant to deliver them the championship." Andy's letters were filled with the approaching struggle. He was in special training with his friend, Cyril Redmon. Sally caught her breath

at that name. Redmon was a name to conjure with, socially and financially. And Andy was his friend! They told each other with tremulous smiles that their Andy had already traveled a long way from "Who'd Have Thought It."

It was Sally who thought of surprising Andy, and see the Thanksgiving game. Money had always been too scarce to permit them to visit the university. The trip must come from extra work, for there were too many places for all regular money. Not a penny of it could be spared. Sally managed to find some extra work and for two weeks she slaved. With anxious hands their shabby best was patched and cleaned. Never were they so happy as on Thanksgiving morning. All smiles and a lunch carefully packed before, they stepped on the train.

The stadium was already crowded when they arrived. A little timid and bewildered by the jostling mob, they had found their seats. They did not want to see Andy before the game, for they felt their presence might excite him. Afterward they would hunt him up. How pleased he would be to see them! Breathlessly they waited for the game to start.

The teams were too evenly matched for comfort, and the game was frightfully close. The contest narrowed down to a grim, merciless line battle. Again and again the opposing elevens lunged at each other, sought furiously to break through without apparent results. The first, second, and third quarters passed, a deadlock, with the grand stand in a sullen frenzy. Then at the beginning of the last quarter the university began slowly, but surely, to push over. Again and again with the force of a huge battering ram Andy hurled his sinewy body through the opposing line. Inch by inch the university approached their goal.

"Three minutes to go!" chanted the timekeeper.

"Third down, ten yards to gain!" intoned the referee.

The grand stand was in a turmoil.

"Let Bryant have the ball! Get 'em, Andy! Go to it, Red! Take it across, big boy!"

The whistle blew, the ball flashed, there was the crunch of bodies, a figure lunged, head low, to the left, to the right, dodged here, dodged there, then leaped ahead like a startled deer.

"He's over! Bryant's over! A touchdown! The university wins! Bryant! Bryant! Bryant!"

A thousand voices took up the cry. Andy, dirty, disheveled, his red head ruffled, was lifted aloft on proud shoulders and borne from the field. Up in the roaring, weaving grand stand a girl in a shabby blue suit, and a broad bosomed gray haired woman embraced each other amid happy tears.

Sally and Mrs. Bryant never knew just how they fought their way down to the club house where the victorious heroes were surrounded with adoring enthusiasts. But somehow, breathless, hats slightly askew, they made it. There, in the center of a delirious mob, they saw Andy. People were shaking his hand, patting his shoulder, reaching over each other to catch his eye. A little intimidated by all the hubbub, Sally and his mother drew away slightly to one side where they could watch with shining eyes his triumph and somewhat recover their breath.

Just at this time a tall, fair-haired young fellow approached. Andy's face lighted instantly.

"Hi, there, Cyril!" he said affectionately, extending his battered hand.

Cyril! Sally caught her breath. This was Cyril Redmon, one of the much looked up to Redmons. He was singularly handsome and fastidiously dressed. Sally's heart beat fast with pride. He was Andy's friend.

"Andy, old chap," Cyril was saying, "I want you to meet an old friend of

mine," he stood aside and Sally saw a slender, imperious young figure in rich brown furs, a beautiful, exotically colored young creature with glorious golden hair and wonderful violet eyes, "Miss Vivian Hayden."

A dull red crept into Andy's cheek. Sally knew he was wondering if Viv-

and Andy, coloring painfully, took it reverently between his, almost as if he feared he might crush it. The crowd was beginning to thin out. Sally was suddenly seized with a panic. For the first time she realized how far Andy had grown away from them. He belonged here with people like Cyril Red-



"Andy, old chap," Cyril was saying, "I want you to meet an old friend of mine, Miss Vivian Hayden."

ian Hayden remembered him. There was not the faintest sign of recognition in her eyes, however. Indeed it was a far cry from the freckle-faced, red-headed boy who had peddled Christmas greens at her father's door, years before, to this handsome, toasted young athlete—the hero of the hour.

She held out a slim, gracious hand,

mon and Vivian Hayden. But they—she stole a miserable glance at her shabby self in her patched and faded suit, her worn and dusty shoes, and at Mrs. Bryant in her rusty and voluminous black dress, her quaint old-fashioned bonnet. Something ached in the girl's throat. They—they did not belong here. They were out of place.

Andy would be ashamed. They would mortify him if he should see them. It was his big day, his hour. He had met the girl of his dreams. Met her on equal footing. They must not spoil it all and disgrace him.

"Come," Sally whispered hurriedly to Mrs. Bryant, "we must get away. He must not see us."

"Yes," replied the bent old woman, who had sacrificed so much for her son. With a break in her voice, she confided that it had been a mistake for them to come. "We would only shame him."

Silently they slipped away in the crowd. As they trudged a bit wearily to the station a car passed them. They had a glimpse of three shining faces before the machine was gone, Cyril Redmon was driving, Vivian Hayden in the middle, and Andy on the other side, gazing into her lovely face with radiant bedazzled eyes.

That winter Mrs. Bryant contracted rheumatism. Her right arm was incapacitated. She could not work, and Andy, within three months of graduating, was dependent on her small earnings. Sally found the toil-worn old mother in tears one dismal afternoon and again it was she who flung herself into the breach. Sally even quit school and went to work at the foundry. Andy never suspected that she was caring for his own helpless mother, besides her poor shiftless old grandfather, who had grown very feeble. He never knew that it was out of her meager earnings, too, that his degree was being made possible. The day came when Andy finished. It was a great day. He came home, a great upstanding figure of a man with a fine ruddy head and brave blue eyes. His mother wept with pride on his shoulder. Through Cyril Redmon, he had received a splendid offer to go into the office of Redmon & Company along with Cyril himself. Of

course the salary was small, the niche a tiny one, but there were great opportunities for advancement, and Andy was elated. Sally and his mother likewise were enthusiastic over his offer.

It was Andy's plan to move his mother immediately into better lodgings but to this she would not consent. She knew that Andy's salary was hardly more than nominal. He must have his chance. She resolved not to saddle him with a handicap before he had fairly begun his struggle. Cyril Redmon had an apartment down town and he wanted Andy to share it with him. It meant everything to Andy, both socially and financially. Since Sally's grandfather had died that winter, Mrs. Bryant proposed that she come to live with her, so that Andy might feel more free to accept Cyril Redmon's offer. At first Andy demurred but both Sally and his mother urged the feasibility of the plan so repeatedly that he finally yielded on condition that his mother accept a small allowance so that there need be no more washing.

Thanks partly to Cyril Redmon's influence, but mostly to his own hard work and grim determination, Andy advanced rapidly. He had little time of his own and his visits to "Who'd Have Thought It" were few and far between, but Sally and his mother understood. It was enough for them to read his name in the society columns of the daily papers, and to know that he was progressing. Vivian was away at school but Sally knew from Andy's eyes he had not forgotten her, and that she was still the lodestar which drew him on.

At the first of the year Andy received a word of commendation and a substantial increase in salary. Again he insisted on removing his mother to more comfortable surroundings. Again he encountered loving importunities. He needed the money himself. A man

of his position had to keep up appearances. He would never get on saddled with extra expense. His mother insisted that she was more comfortable than ever in her life before, due to the modest allowance he made her, and, as before, he finally yielded.

Sally was doing rather well herself. She had found when she came to give it up that she had counted more dearly on schooling than she knew, and quietly enough she attended night school. After a while she attracted the attention of old Belfast himself. He questioned her, liked her fearless yet respectful bearing, and she was taken out of the works and given a place in his office. The hours there were less confining, the work much less arduous, and the pay doubled.

The following November Vivian made her début. Sally read all about it in the papers. There were glowing accounts of her beauty, her gown, a priceless strand of pearls, her father's gift, and a long list of those present which was a roster of the socially prominent. Among them Sally found Andy's name. But she had known already he was there. The night before, consumed by a restlessness foreign to her nature, she had made her way, buffeted by the wind, up the narrow sloping street from "Who'd Have Thought It" to the Drive. Standing well within the shadow of the great hedge which separated that last and most imposing house from the street, she had gazed hungrily in at the lights and flowers and music, the prettily gowned girls dancing with men in evening dress, and among them she had seen Andy with Vivian. For a moment their faces had stood out from all the crowd, but they vanished in the mêlée, leaving a picture of stalwart, handsome Andy, with his fine ruddy head, gazing down at the lovely face of Vivian beneath him.

Alone in the night without, a new bitterness welled up in Sally's heart. For the first time she resented her fate. Why was she doomed to tread a path so different from the butterfly creatures dancing there in the lights? Why should she, younger than most of them, be beset with toil and pain while they were shielded from every care? A new pain clutched at her heart, a new agony. She found her hands knotting and unknotting, and suddenly she hated the lovely, fair-haired girl whom Andy loved, but she hated herself more.

In the months which followed Andy came but seldom to "Who'd Have Thought It." He was working doggedly, grimly bent on lifting himself by his very bootstraps to the level with the girl who for years had dominated his thoughts. Already he was spoken of as a "coming man" by those who knew. He had received another substantial raise in salary, but the raise this time went without question into flowers, bonbons, taxi cabs and theater tickets for the most sought after débutante of the season. Vivian Hayden had scores of suitors, but none who went into the battle with fire in his eyes, and grim, relentless lines about his mouth like Andy. Andy had staked everything on winning the imperious lady of his dreams, and his persistence both frightened and fascinated her. She called him her cave man, her savage, but his ardor flattered her, and she did not discourage him. After all he was a coming man, and handsome in a virile, manly way. Besides, a débutante must marry some one. Her father predicted great things for a man of Andy's determination.

Sometimes in the mad rush of social life which seemed suddenly to have engulfed Andy, he realized with a sudden guilty start that it had been weeks since he had seen his mother. Overcome by remorse he was apt, on such

occasions, to drop everything, rush down to "Who'd Have Thought It" and overwhelm his mother and Sally with cyclonic tenderness and attention. In one of his fits of penitence he took his friend, Cyril Redmon, with him, as if to prove, to himself probably, that he was not ashamed of his gray-haired old mother with her calloused hands and stooped figure. The evening proved entirely different from what Andy had expected.

In the first place, from her increased earnings, Sally, now private secretary to old Belfast himself, had refurnished the old house. There were gay chintzes at the windows and a few big, comfortable chairs which Sally herself had covered with the same material, a couch and a softly shaded lamp, fashioned by Sally's own clever hands. Mrs. Bryant, broad and motherly, was as usual scrupulously neat, and Cyril, who could not remember his own mother, proceeded to fall in love with her on the spot.

"You see so few real mothers today," he said to Andy with a new wistfulness, "no real old-fashioned mothers with gray hair and wrinkles. How I envy you that mother of yours."

Sally, in some unaccountable fashion which surprised and pleased Andy, was not at all intimidated by the presence of their distinguished guest. She looked very trim and pretty in her tailored serge dress. She laughed and talked quite as freely as if they were alone. She and Cyril popped corn at the open fire and pulled candy, and Andy had never seen his friend so hilarious nor so reluctant to take his departure.

"My word, Andy, but there's a regular girl!" he confided when they were speeding homeward in his machine. "There's character in every line of her face. She's not one of these wax dolls we see every day. She's—real—genuine! I—I can imagine her fighting

with every drop of blood in her body for the man she loves!"

Andy nodded thoughtfully. There was something wholesome about Sally which he missed in other girls—a frank camaraderie, a sort of man-to-man attitude, entirely devoid of coquetry which he had not often discovered. And she was pretty, too, in her way, with her burnished, brown head, her fearless blue eyes, and her firm, sensitive red lips. Of course, she was not pretty in Vivian Hayden's way, with a pink-and-white complexion, but nevertheless wholesomely, sturdily pretty.

The next day Andy received the big promotion toward which he had striven so doggedly. That night, too, had its reward, for he won Vivian Hayden's hand. He could scarcely believe that the dream of his boyhood had come true at last! Against almost overwhelming odds he had struggled upward, had earned the prize he had coveted with all his boyish heart years before. Still, somehow, his triumph fell a little flat. Although he did not understand it, he was conscious of a sense of disappointment. Like many another man he had embraced his ideal, to find it rather less than his ideal after all. Although he would never have admitted it, Vivian's kisses had not thrilled him as he had expected, and there was an uncomfortable little feeling in the bottom of his heart that she was marrying not Andy Bryant, but a coming man of whom she expected great things.

Even his good friend, Cyril Redmon, did not seem especially pleased over Andy's extraordinary good fortune.

"Vivian's no fool," he remarked in a tone that made Andy redder, "she knows a good thing when she sees it."

"Now, see here, Redmon," began Andy hotly. "I'll not have—"

"Aw, shut up, Andy," interrupted

the other, a bit wearily; "we're too good friends to quarrel. The only thing I can't understand is why a man will step over a real jewel to snatch up an imitation."

With this cryptic remark he closed the conversation.

A week after his engagement had been announced, Andy took his fiancée to meet his mother. Vivian knew her lover's humble origin. She knew her share in lifting him from his sordid surroundings, and gloried in it, and Andy could detect no change in her countenance when the limousine swept into "Who'd Have Thought It." But if she concealed her feeling, the chauffeur suffered no such constraint. His rigid back expressed open disapproval of the neighborhood, and his nose elevated to the last angle when they paused before the humble little shanty where Andy's mother lived. It was not so bare and homely as it had been. Sally had planted vines and flowers and prevailed upon old Belfast to donate a coat of paint, but it was far different from that great and imposing house on the Drive where Vivian lived.

Mrs. Bryant was at home alone, as Sally was at work. There was an almost defiant note in Andy's voice as he presented his stooped old mother in her neat but very plain black dress, to his lovely young fiancée, whose beauty was enhanced by the gorgeous garments she wore. They were by far the most elegant Andy's mother had ever seen.

"This is my mother, Vivian," he said warmly, "to whose self-sacrifice I owe everything. Mother, this is Vivian, my promised wife."

"Ah, m'darling," there was a sob in the old woman's voice as she spoke, "I am most proud to meet you."

She held out her arms but somehow Vivian Hayden contrived to avoid them, and the kiss which she planted

on the old woman's wrinkled cheek was frosty. Conversation more or less languished. Andy was restless and ill at ease, his mother downcast. Vivian, he could not help but feel, was cool and detached. In the limousine as they sped homeward she said nothing. But Andy knew with a sinking of his heart that while she had accepted him, Vivian Hayden would never accept his mother.

Days lengthened into weeks and weeks into months and still Vivian deferred their wedding day. Andy, hurt, confused, was at his wit's end. He was still working very hard, he had to make good. Whatever leisure time he had was claimed jealously, possessively by his fiancée, yet he saw her very little alone. There was an apparently endless round of balls, parties, dinners, and receptions, to which at Vivian's stilted little heels he stalked. His life stretched out before him a hideous series of such affairs. He came to hate the hollow mockery of society. Yet it was the breath of life in Vivian's nostrils. He almost never went home. After a while he realized with a little throb of passionate resentment that Vivian was subtly separating him, estranging him from that home. Sometimes he sought to reason with her. He told her of his mother's great sacrifices, the half of which even he did not know. Begged her to consider her loneliness. But it was all in vain. Vivian listened to what he said, but uttered no protests, made no promises, and remained aloof from the little old woman in "Who'd Have Thought It."

Sometimes Andy rebelled at the silken chains with which his fiancée sought to bind him to her chariot wheels. He sought his mother's home without her. To his surprise he found that Cyril was always there, laughing with Sally, and jesting with his mother. Although he did not quite understand



"But I don't understand!" protested Andy. "You are everything a woman could ask in a man!"

it, Cyril's continued presence some way filled Andy with a strange depression, which bordered on resentment. Suddenly these visits ceased. Cyril came no more, and one day he told Andy the reason. Sally had refused him.

"But I don't understand!" protested Andy, wondering at a sudden relief which thrilled through his every vein. "You are everything a woman could ask in a man! I—I really—I don't see!"

"No," said Cyril with a sudden short laugh, "you don't see. I guess you never will."

At length there came a day when Andy reached the end of his rope. For months Vivian had kept him dangling at her side, giving him scant crumbs of her time, playing upon his devotion, his loyalty, keeping him ever at her beck and call, yet refusing to set their wedding day, and Andy, who had always placed her on a pedestal, lost some of his illusions. He had worshiped her as something precious, fine,

and above reproach. He had discovered against his will that she was not the creature of his imagination. She was even dishonest about trifles. Her word meant nothing to her, and, although he would not admit it to himself, she had violated the shrine which he had made for her in his heart, violated it by her vanity, her petty tricks, her selfishness. He was miserable, and had been miserable for weeks. Sometimes, looking at it reasonably, he hardly knew why. But down deep in his heart there was a longing which hungered for something, he knew not what. At last he issued his ultimatum. Vivian would marry him four weeks from that day or not at all. And Vivian, with a curious expression in her eyes which baffled him, consented.

Night found him discontented and restless. He was suddenly wearied to death of the places he had to go. It all bored him. The prospect of an evening in the cold and formal atmosphere of that imposing mansion on the Drive

chilled him. He was eager for warm, human companionship, for something he had missed desperately in the coldly beautiful face of his fiancée, in her father's haughty countenance, and her mother's supercilious eyes. It slowly dawned upon him it was his mother's worn and wrinkled face, the warm, friendly tones of Sally's voice, the brave camaraderie in her eyes that had never failed him, that he was homesick for. Sally at least was never cold and designing. She was as free of intrigue and the social chicaneries which Vivian practiced as could be.

When he reached the shanty in "Who'd Have Thought It," however, he gave a start of surprise. For before his mother's house stood a limousine. Andy knew it instantly. It was Vivian's!

He quickened his pace, lifted the latch, pushed the door noiselessly open, then paused, his hand on the knob, transfixed.

"I tell you it is impossible"—he recognized Vivian's cold, drawling voice—"I can not have it. Andy has risen above all this. He is a coming man. The future extends before him. Don't you see that you alone are the drag, the incumbrance? He can never go far with you to hinder?"

"A drag! A hindrance!" cried his mother's broken voice. "I drag my boy down? Oh, no, miss, you are mistaken. Why I—I have given the best that is in me to put him where he is!"

"But you do drag him down nevertheless," went on that merciless voice, "he can never be anybody as long as you persist in clinging to him. I will not marry him until he is freed of you. I could never saddle myself with a man whose mother was a washerwoman in "Who'd Have Thought It."

"Oh!" Andy quivered at the little moaning sigh which came from his mother's lips.

"If you will go away," continued

Vivian Hayden, "where no one will know, I will marry Andy. Otherwise, our engagement is off. Do you realize what that will mean to him?"

"How can you be so cruel!" interrupted a spirited voice.

It was Sally. Again Andy thanked God for Sally. Loyal, little Sally with a heart as true as steel. Something began to flutter in his breast, the consciousness of something very sweet, very precious, something he had sensed dimly for many weary weeks.

"How can you be so heartless!" continued Sally, her voice quivering with anger. "You pretend to love Andy. If you did, you could not help but love his poor old mother who bore him, who toiled to educate him, who went hungry that he might progress. You do not know what love is, for love is self-forgetful, self-sacrificing. If you loved Andy, and he was half to you what he is to me, you would take his old mother to your heart!"

"Nevertheless," continued Vivian Hayden coldly, "whether I love him or not, he loves me. It will break his heart if I refuse him now. It is for you to choose. Either his mother takes herself away, out of his life forever, or our engagement is off."

"I'll go, I'll go," sobbed the old woman. "I'll never be a drag on my boy. I'll go away. I promise I'll never see him again."

"Here is money, plenty of it," said Vivian Hayden, hurriedly. "I will send more when this is gone. Only keep away."

"No"—it was Sally and her voice rang like a bell—"we want none of your horrid money! I can care for this poor old woman. She's the only mother I know. I'll work my fingers to the bone for her. But we'll—we'll go for Andy's sake"—her voice broke—"we'd do anything for Andy. We'll never bother you again. You may rest assured of that."

"Wait!"

It was a low, passionate exclamation. It drew every eye. Vivian uttered a sharp cry and clutched her throat. In the doorway stood Andy!

"Mother!"

Andy held out his arms and his old mother crept into them. Across her

a vain and selfish creature, merciless, heartless, loveless!"

Vivian Hayden shrank from the contempt in his blue eyes.

"I built up a host of illusions about you. To-night they lie at my feet. At last I am freed from the spell you have cast over me for so many years.



"Wait!"

It was a low, passionate exclamation.  
It drew every eye.

silvery head Andy gazed at Vivian and in his eyes there was a look of disapproval.

"I have admired you since I was a boy," he said in a voice that was like ice. "To-night I know I have never loved you. The girl I admired never existed. I have been long in learning just what you are, but at last I know you for

Your lovely face no longer awakens a thrill in my breast. I do not flatter myself that I ever touched your heart. You have none. I am sure we understand each other. Your limousine is waiting. Need we detain you longer?"

And with a strained white face and stricken eyes Vivian Hayden passed out of Andy's life forever.

"Mother," he was kneeling now at her side, "you blessed creature. You would have gone away and left me, never to have seen me again? You would have done this, thinking you would help me. Always helping me!" he added.

"There is no sacrifice too great for mother love, my son," said his mother, wiping her eyes.

"From now on there's to be no more sacrificing for me. Understand? And you, Sally," Andy turned to Sally's averted figure, "you would have gone from me forever, too, little pal?"

Sally tried bravely to meet his eyes and failed before the radiance in his face. Gently he drew her into his arms, kissed her lips, and a new fire swept through him, a sweet intoxication. There was something missing in Vivian's kisses. They had left him chilled and cold. Sally's electrified

him. He realized—and not too late—that it had been Sally always. Sally, his little pal, whom he really loved. Sally who had never failed him, whose word was as good as the law, Sally who was warmly, fiercely, passionately loyal, Sally whose brave, sweet eyes were hallowed by the purity of her love.

"All this time I've—I've only been dazzled," he whispered at length. "Been blinded by a false light. I strayed afar. But now I see. I have always loved you, Sally. The other was infatuation, a mirage, this—this is real. I love you! I always have, and I always shall!"

Whereupon he gathered his mother in one arm and Sally in the other, and kissed them both.

And so did Andy happen at last upon the rare and perfect jewel after he had for years sought the false.



**B**ELOWING her to be shallow and worthless, he decides to punish the bride whom he has just married. . . . Read the details in

## Why He Married Her

It will be published in LOVE STORY MAGAZINE  
soon



## Echoes of a Breaking Heart

By VICTOR A. BERRY

WHEN moons go down at midnight,  
When dews are on the rose,  
When bands are playing "Home, Sweet Home,"  
Just as the dances close,  
When lovers kiss in rapture,  
And sweethearts sadly part—  
I think I hear the echo clear  
Of some one's breaking heart!

The echo of a breaking heart,  
How sad it sounds to-night!  
A young face wan and haggard  
Gleams in the pale moonlight,  
With twisted lips, and anguished eyes  
That look through falling tears  
At all the woeful vistas  
Of all the woeful years.

Yes, every night at midnight—  
Ah, what a bitter sound—  
A thousand hearts are breaking  
The dreary world around.  
Their owners keep on living  
A life without a name,  
A life which cannot ever—  
No, never be the same.

Sometimes we smile at nothings;  
We laugh in hollow tones,  
But life ebbs by like brooks run dry  
Down beds of sullen stones.  
And dreams rise up before us  
Out of the long ago  
To blight and sear each instant here—  
Ah, well, I ought to know.

# Snakes in the Grass



by  
*Charlotte  
E.  
Lewis*

ABOVE the clatter of the knives and forks in the dish pan Helen Somers could hear their voices in the sitting room—the children's, the school teacher's, and John's. They were working out a puzzle in "The Farmer," and laughing.

Their laughter was carefree, as is the laughter of those whose work is done for the night. Helen's work was not done. Many things were awaiting her tired hands before she could sit in the sitting room, where the big, white flamed lamp was. There were the supper dishes to finish; bread to set, and the oatmeal and prunes to put to soak for morning. The little chickens had to be shut up, with a rock against the loosened slat in the overturned barrel to protect them from snakes in the night.

John always used to carry the lantern for her when she went to shut up the chickens, walking ahead of her because she was afraid of snakes. With a start Helen remembered, as though some unrecognized resentment at the unshared merriment in the sitting room had pushed the realization up out of her subconsciously, that she had carried the

lantern herself all this week—all last week and the week before.

John used to remember about the snakes when he heard her take down the lantern from its nail and scratch a match on the unceiled kitchen wall. She tried to remember when he had first forgotten.

She remembered.

It was the night the teacher was showing him the new card game she had learned on her Christmas vacation. She was like that—the bobbed-haired blond young thing they had sent down from the Normal school for her first year's experience. For a fleeting moment Helen's thoughts brushed a picture stamped into her memory of a childhood visit to the home of an aunt where the district school teacher boarded. She had been a middle-aged woman, spectacled and parchment-skinned, reading the Primary Methods magazine and grading arithmetic papers at night. Queer, how times changed. Did it mean one was getting old, when one began to notice it like that?

John had apologized that first night he forgot about the snakes, dropping the

cards on the floor, when Helen came back in with her house dress limp and smeary to the hem line, from sweeping the dew drenched weeds.

But the next night he had forgotten again, and had not apologized. And she had not noticed. John was tired too—plowing all day.

John hadn't wanted Helen to take the teacher to board. Good heavens, hadn't she enough to do already? And that flighty young snip! She'd be putting notions into their Bessie's head, first thing they knew, with her rouge and her lip sticks around on the only dresser in the house. But the board money would help; and they were skimped until the cotton came on. The children needed things. And school would be out before the heaviest of the spring rush. So John had consented at last, reluctantly. He had grumbled, at first, seeing Helen fussing at the ironing board over white blouses for the teacher. He had not grumbled lately.

John had supplied the last word needed to solve the puzzle. The raised voices in the sitting room swallowed up the faint rasping swish of Helen's match across the kitchen wall. She held the lantern at arm's length before her on the way to the chicken yard, its feeble, wavering rays forming a dim circle that shut her in from the surrounding dark. She put her feet down gingerly, shaking the top of the weeds at each step, ears keyed for the sinister, warning buzz she dreaded. She had almost stepped on a rattler once, before she had learned to know that buzz. It chilled her flesh yet to remember it.

The chickens cheeped sleepily when she knelt beside the barrel, throwing the lantern rays inside. The sound seemed inexpressibly homely, dear, and normal. All at once the warped world swung around where it belonged. A hundred times they had heard that drowsy cheep together, she and John, this spring and other springs. A hun-

dred times again they would hear it together. How silly she had been tonight! It was because she was tired.

Carefully she put the stone into place against the barrel slat. Going back to the house, the strong night breeze from the bay billowed her dress, and blew her hair loose about her forehead. Extinguishing the lantern light, she sat for a moment on the back step, face to the salt-tinged wind.

Eyes adjusting themselves to the dark, she could see out into the cotton field that stretched south and west from the little patch of weedy dooryard. No particle of the precious black soil, wrested with such back-breaking effort from the tangle of mesquite and chaparral, had been wasted. Every square foot of their eighty acres, aside from the little rectangle in the corner where the house and few patched together outbuildings stood, was in cultivation.

Acre by acre they had won it. Twenty dollars an acre was the cheapest rate they could get from the grubbing contractor, and so John had cleared it himself, hiring Mexicans by the day and working with them; coming in sweaty and bleeding, night after night, stupid with weariness. It had been a lonely time for Helen—transplanted from the gay little gulf coast town that had been their home when Bessie and Emmet were born. But always she had seen—by faith largely and often through a glass darkly, but never quite indiscernible, John's vision of the farm that was to be. John's vision was of gold in the rich jet soil—"the best black land in Texas." John's vision of a modern bungalow replacing the unpainted up-and-down boards of the thrown together four-room shack. Other farms carved out of the brush, touching theirs. School houses, churches, hard-surfaced roads; a railroad from the north buildings into Gulfside, five miles away, where the cotton gin was located.

They had finished clearing the winter

Tad was born, and what was left of the first crop money after paying the debt for breaking the land—nothing but a steam plow could turn that compact virgin soil—went for the doctor's bills. Then had followed two poor years! Too much rain the first, drowning the fields, and none at all the second. Tad was now three.

But it couldn't be like that always. John still saw the vision—the best black land in Texas! They'd make it this year.

Helen could distinguish the cotton rows in the field, long, dark and even. In between, the black earth. Not a weed was in it for John kept the field clean as a floor, rising early and working as long as he could see. He was proud of his cotton.

"We ought to get a bale to the acre, Helen, with a stand like that," he had told her, over and over. That had been his dream from the beginning.

Sea birds flew by overhead. Helen wondered how their little farm would look from the sky—one clean cut patch of smoothness in the limitless snarl of brush. The dusty green of the ragged, sprawly chaparral, touched by kindly darkness into something of mysterious beauty, became somehow less stifling, less imprisoning.

Helen went in, hung the lantern quietly on its nail, and joined the group in the sitting room. The school teacher was polishing her pink nails, and yawning. John was rocking little Tad to sleep. Over the teacher's bent head he caught Helen's eyes, and smiled indulgently. And when, a moment later, Helen began to fuss about Tad, unbuttoning his garments, John unobtrusively and quite casually caught and drew across his lips her own stained, work-broken nails.

Spring slips into summer early and suddenly in Southwest Texas. School was closed. Rain fell; not too much,

nor too often. For breathless days—weeks, John and Helen watched their cotton grow. Never had they seen a field like it. John fought weeds like a demon. At length came the day they could distinguish the bolls from the windows. On its heels the day the first streaks of white showed through the bursting green. And on top of that unbelievable, breath-taking news of steadily mounting prices!

All at once it was picking time. John borrowed a truck from a neighbor three miles away, and brought a load of pickers out from Gulfside, rigging up camp shelters for them at the end of the field. The pickers went into the fields at day-break—whole families together, brown-legged children dragging cotton sacks almost as heavy as themselves.

Almost overnight the big field burst into splotches of white, like an immense corn popper. Wagon load after wagon load, piled high, went to the gin at Gulfside, and yet it seemed that the little army of pickers had made no impression on the wide green and white sea.

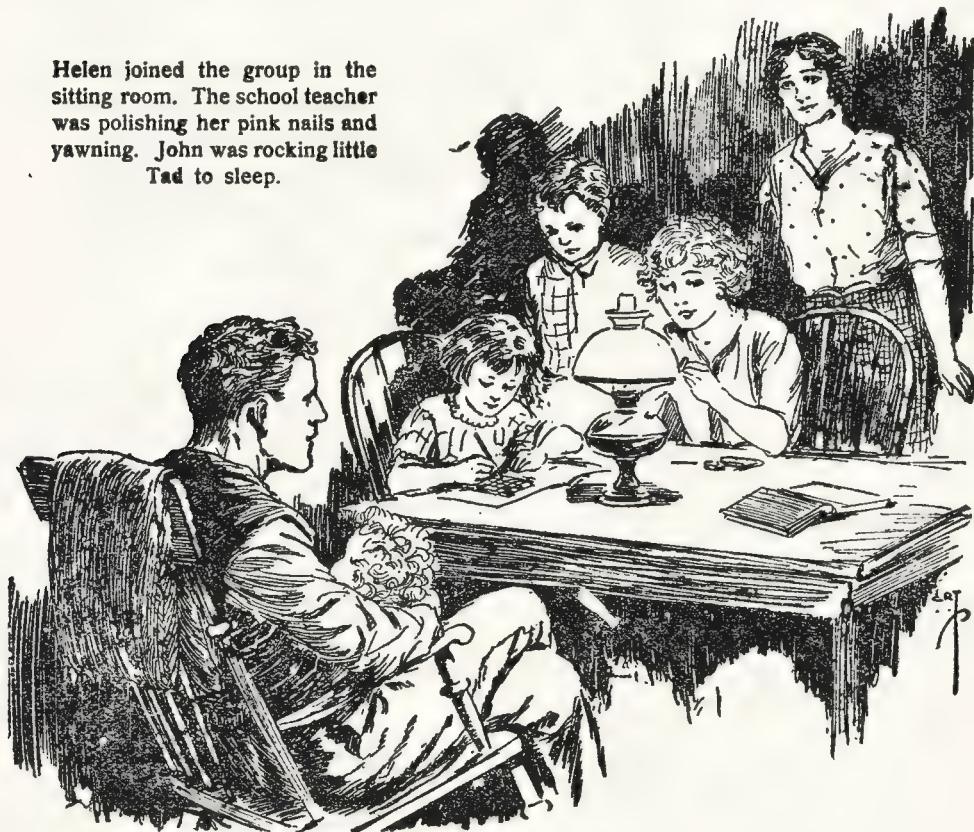
"We need four times as many pickers," declared John. "We've got to have them!" He took a day—a whole precious day—to drive to Ingle Pass, thirty miles away, in his neighbor's truck, and came back alone. Big crops in surrounding counties had taken all the available help. Frantically he wired to labor contractors in San Antonio, with no results. He raised the pay for pickers from seventy-five cents to a dollar a hundred. Two or three wanderers, hearing of it, came. He could have used a dozen.

Even Helen and the children went with him into the fields. Side by side with the other fellow toilers, they picked, dragging the long, heavy sacks behind them, up one row and down another. One day was like every other day. Up before daybreak; a hasty breakfast in the heavy, oppressive stillness of the early dawn of the coast coun-

try; back-bending toil under a merciless Texan sun, hoping the gulf breeze would come up. Rest, for a few hours, in the middle of the day. That was rest for all but Helen. There was dinner to prepare for the others; dishes to wash. Then she would go back to the fields again, long sacks dragging from sore

hauled to the gin, and the stalks stood stark and brown in the fields, scattered shreds of soiled white, frayed from the winds, clinging to them. John had made his bale to the acre, and more, and the price had soared beyond their wildest dreams. There was money in the bank—more money than John and

Helen joined the group in the sitting room. The school teacher was polishing her pink nails and yawning. John was rocking little Tad to sleep.



shoulders. The afternoon sun was more penetrating than that of the morning; but almost always there was the breeze. That was all that made it bearable.

Night after night, fatigue merged into stupor, Helen crept to bed too tired to hear the children's prayers. And Bessie and Emmet were too tired to say them. Hot week crawled after hot week. And thus the summer passed.

At last the final wagon load was

Helen had owned before in all the years they had been married.

"We can have the bedroom ceiled now, before cold weather, can't we, John?" asked Helen. "And an elevated tank at the windmill so we can put a sink with running water in the kitchen?"

"Yes, girl, sure—before winter. "I'll see to it, some of these days. There's no rush."

"But John, I don't want to wait. If

you knew how I've wanted that sink, carrying water all these years from the pump."

"I'll see to it, some day when I'm in town."

It was not like John to put her off. Helen wondered if the summer's unremitting toil had calloused him. She had heard of work, which when long-continued, affected people like that.

"What you need—what we both need," suggested John—a little diffidently, Helen thought, "is a vacation. Why don't you take the youngsters and go to your sister's in Ingle Pass for a good long rest—say six weeks. Yes, you need all of six weeks."

"And you, John?"

"I think I'll run up to Austin for that visit to my mother that I've been promising so long. It'll do us both good to get away for awhile, after slaving as we have this summer."

A queer little chill settled on Helen's heart. They had talked about that visit to Austin ever since they had bought the farm. And always before, in planning for it, John had said "we." Now, quite casually, almost as if unconsciously, he had said "I." Helen was too deeply hurt to remind him of those other plans. The next day John drove both her and the children in their rusty old car to Ingle Pass, and left them there.

"Take a good long rest, Helen; you've earned it," he told her. "Check what you need from the bank. I'll not be gone more than six weeks. I'll come for you six weeks from to-day. Turn the youngsters loose on the beach, and forget everything."

"Yes," answered Helen. Then, perfunctorily, "have a good time, John."

"A good time—oh, why, sure—yes." It was afterward that Helen remembered he did not meet her eyes when he kissed her good-by.

Helen had not known how tired she was until she began to rest. She lay

within sound of the pulsing throb of the bay, the peacefulness, the absence of any compulsion for movement, lapping her soul like healing waters. The children raced on the sands like glad young animals.

Two weeks went by, and she realized that John had not written. It hurt and puzzled her. She remembered that in her disappointment over the Austin trip she had exacted no promises from him, and had not even reminded him to write. Perhaps he thought it was unnecessary, since he would be gone so short a time. She made excuses for him to herself. Still, it would have been a little thing to have written a page—a postcard even. Or picture postcards to the children.

As if her own thoughts had evoked the question, her sister Esther, direct, tactless, uncompromising, pounced upon her at breakfast.

"Heard from John yet?"

"No," quietly, and with forced casualness.

"Well, for Heaven's sakes!"

"Oh, he may not write at all," lightly. "Such a short time he'll be gone, and so many relatives to see. It's hardly worth while."

"H'm!" Esther snorted, contemptuously, and began to talk of other things such as the new electric stove she expected to install, because it was less trouble than gas. Helen thought of her own modest dream of an elevated tank, with a water tap in the kitchen. Also the ceiled walls for the bedroom. She wished John would come back. She was tired of her vacation.

Another week went by. The hours began to drag. It was the first day of the fifth week, when Esther burst in from the street, trembling with news, white-faced.

"Helen—Oh, Helen!" Her voice was pitying.

"What?" The dull, aching homesickness leaped into quick alarm, making her voice sharp.

"You've got to know! Oh, my poor dear. Helen, John isn't in Austin. He never did go to Austin."

"Oh, but Esther, you're mistaken." Helen was white-lipped. "He said he was going there."

"But he didn't go. Mr. Franklin, next door, you know, saw him yesterday in a San Antonio department store. A girl was with him, a girl with light bobbed hair. They were buying things. Mr. Franklin just got back on the morning train. He doesn't suspect anything, of course; just asked me incidentally, and sociablelike, who the girl was; said he'd seen them driving together on the Gulfside road several times lately and wondered if you had an older daughter than Bessie. It's that—that teacher, Helen."

"That teacher." Helen's tongue repeated the words, parrotlike, but her mind seemed frozen.

She could say no more.

"It struck me as mighty strange at the time, his sending you and the children here. He never could spare you before. And then when he didn't write, either. Well, it's no wonder he didn't with that girl back in Gulfside. And after you've slaved away your youth for him, out there in the brush!"

Helen heard the sound of her sister's voice, but the words did not register.

"Of course you'll leave him!" Esther's excitement was subsiding, and she began to plan—cold-bloodedly, Helen thought. "You can stay here. Bessie and Emmet can go to Junior High, and now that Tad's getting so big, you can go to work. You can earn a living for the three of you, and not work half as hard as you did on the farm. You could get a job clerking in Cohn's store. The courts will give you the children."

The import of her sister's words penetrated Helen's consciousness.

"Esther, what are you talking about? I'm not going to leave John."

"Do you mean to say, Helen, that you'd go back to him, after a thing like this?"

"And do you mean to say, Esther, that you would advise me to leave the man I love, and the one who loves me, simply because a neighbor of yours saw him in a San Antonio store with a girl we know?"

"But why did he lie to you about going to Austin?"

"If he changed his plan he had a reason for it."

"But why didn't he let you know he had changed his plan? You only thirty miles away!"

"He had a reason for that too, I guess."

"What reason on earth could he have?"

"I don't know," wearily. "But—I trust him."

"You trust him just because you're a poor, blind fool. It's plain enough to me what's happened. Look at yourself in the glass. There! Oh, I don't mean to be unkind, but no woman can be a beast of burden as you've been these five years you've lived out there in the brush and keep her looks. I've told you that, times enough before. John, looking past you all these years at his own dreams of that wonderful farm, hasn't seen how you have been wilting into as limp and lifeless a thing as one of the cotton sacks you've dragged behind you over his fields. Along comes this silly short-haired girl, full of life and young enthusiasms, and all at once he does see. And as soon as the crop is out of the way he sends you and the children over here to get you out of the way. Do you still believe he will come after you when the six weeks he set are up?"

"I know he will."

"You know? How do you know?"

"Because he said he would."

"Helen, one might as well argue with little Tad as with you. But remember

this, dear," suddenly softening, "you may have a home here with me as long as you want it."

"Thank you, Esther, but we shall be going home in two weeks."

Esther gave her sister a pitying glance, and left the room.

For a long time Helen stood at the window watching the patch of gray bay visible through an open space between the clumps of live oak trees in the yard. One by one little incidents came back to her of the months the school teacher had boarded with them. She could recall frivolous laughter, light and gayety in the sitting room, while she had finished the evening work. John's forgetting to go with her to shut up the chickens. But always it had seemed harmless laughter, harmless because of its very frivolity. And the children had been with them. Her mind clutched at that. There had been no evening in which John and the teacher had sat alone in the room. John had not seemed to miss the laughter when school closed and the teacher went away, either. Blotting out the comfort of that, came the remembrance that the spring rush had been on then, and they were all too deadened by work to remember that laughter had been there.

But it could not be—this thing that Esther suspected. Not John—her patient, plodding, faithful John! There would be some explanation. He would come soon, and make everything clear.

She wondered if she ought to buy some new clothes. Men liked them—even men like John. There had been so many years in which there had been no money for new things, but that was not the case now! She would buy a complete new outfit, gay-colored, young-girl things. She would curl her hair, the hair that had grown wisp and dull from long neglect. Powder her face, and maybe she would add a touch of color on the cheek bones. Other women did. And when John saw her he would

be pleased and proud of her. She would show Esther!

But why hadn't John gone to Austin, as he had said he would do? Why hadn't he written? Why hadn't he come? What was he doing in San Antonio?

Resolutely she shut her mind on the tormenting questioning. Tried to think of her new clothes.

She went to the bank next day, to draw the money for her purchases. Gulfside had no bank, and John kept their joint account in the bank at Ingle Pass. It was the first of the month, and she asked the smiling clerk at the window for a statement. Not that she needed it—she knew to a penny how much they had deposited, and how little they had drawn from their precious new wealth. But it gave her a happy little thrill to see the figures. She smiled back at the clerk as he handed her the paper. There was something about him which reminded her of John when John had been young.

The smile grew wan on her face.

"Oh, isn't there some mistake?" she began. Then, hastily, and with an attempt at casualness, "I beg your pardon. It's all right. I—I guess I misread it."

John had checked out exactly half the cotton money—drawing it all in a single check!

What could it mean? That he didn't want her any more? That he had taken his half of their joint account, and gone with the teacher?

She forgot to buy the new clothes.

"What's the matter now, Helen? You look as though you had seen a ghost!" exclaimed Esther, when she reached her sister's home.

"Nothing's the matter. I guess the walk downtown was too much for me." Esther looked at her, curiously, but said nothing.

That night, lying wide-eyed through



the weighted hours, it became clear to Helen at last what she would do. She would take the children and go home, when the six weeks had ended. There was the cotton money! They could live on it a year, two years, even three, with economy. No improvements, of course—she thought, with a twisted little grimace in the dark, as the elevated tank John had promised loomed up in her mind. She would farm the place herself, hiring help by the day. Why not? It was the best black land in Texas. Some day John would come back. Some day his love for her, for the children, for the soil he had wrested from the wilderness, would cure his soul of this strange new madness. In the end, he would find her there—Bessie, Emmet, and Tad, and herself, building their lives into the vision he had taught them to see. Clearer than ever she saw it now! John's vision of the farm that was to be. The little brush-bounded rectangle of clean black field, with its ugly unpainted house, became suddenly dear and precious. Home! Her home, and John's. For John would come back.

The sixth week passed. Early in the

"What's the matter now, Helen? You look as though you had seen a ghost!" exclaimed Esther.

morning of the last day—the day John had promised to come—Helen packed her clothing and the children's. Her mind never had let go of the hope that even yet he would keep his word. She wondered what he would say to her. Noon came, and John was not there. Three o'clock passed—four o'clock. The children began to whimper.

"Never mind, Tad, we'll go home in the morning," she comforted her youngest.

"But you said daddy would come for us to-day."

"Daddy is busy. We'll go to him to-morrow."

In the morning she hired a car and

driver. Recklessly she made out the fifteen-dollars check to pay for the trip. The children were hilariously happy.

On the long, rough drive over the ungraded roads, Helen wondered how she would tell them, to comfort them, when they reached the house and found their father was not there. She heard Emmet, in the front seat with the driver, bragging, big boy-like, that dad had got more cotton to the acre this year than any other grower on the gulf coast. Tad and Bessie at her side, were chattering happily; daddy, daddy, daddy—the word punctuated every sentence. What should she tell them! How to choose the words so that they would believe in him—would keep on believing through the months and years until he came!

Her heart leaped as the long vista of brush parted in the little clearing that was their home. Just one more turn now, and the house would be in sight.

The car turned the corner.

Helen rubbed her eyes and gasped. Could the long puzzled days and nights in Ingle Pass have twisted her reason, that she no longer saw material things as they were? Dimly she became conscious of the children tugging at her sleeve, of Bessie's voice:

"Why, mumsie, what have they done with our house? That isn't our house."

Where the little square up-and-down board shack had stood was a neat, brown shingled bungalow, with long, green sloping roof, and casement windows. It was just the sort of house Helen had looked at in the own-your-own-home pages of the women's magazines.

As in a dream she alighted at the gate, tried the shiny new knob of the front door, and pushed it open. The children wiggled past her.

"Oh, mumsie, it's a regular fairy palace!" cried Bessie, excitedly. "It's bee-utiful. Is it ours? Is it ours, mumsie?"

A fairy palace it looked to Helen's weary eyes. Soft, rich-tuned rugs were

on the polished floors. Heavy, deeply upholstered furniture stood in exactly the right places. Pictures were on the walls; draperies at the windows. Through the living room to the dining room, furnished in the same exquisite taste, Helen followed the eagerly exploring children. A swinging door opened into the kitchen. It answered her dream of one. There were white walls, an enamel-topped table, built-in cupboards, blue-and-white covering on the floor. She sank to a chair, put her head against the glistening white sink, and cried.

It was like that John found her, coming in from the garage at the sound of the children's voices. He gathered her into his arms.

"Well, well, honey girl, so this is the way you take my big surprise? I was just cranking up to come after you. Couldn't get everything in place in time to come yesterday, and I wanted you to see it complete, furniture and all."

"When—when did you do it, John?"

"Been doing it night and day all the time you've been gone. Never went to Austin. Say, Helen, what do you reckon I'd want in Austin without you? I brought a double force of carpenters over from Ingle Pass the day I took you there. Been paying them double time to put in every daylight hour. I had a night shift too, all those moonlight nights, and we just finished putting the wiring in. There is one advantage of building in this part of the country. You can rush it if you want to, and can get the men. I had to get that elevated tank up first of all, to have the water piped through the house. Gee, you haven't seen the bathroom yet. It is all in white. See, we have our own lighting system too—every room's wired. It's taken half the cotton money for the house and furniture together, but I'd have had it for you if it had taken every penny!" He was as happy as a boy.

"John, John!" Helen was breathless, crying still with the wonder of it, and clinging to him. "Everything is beautiful! Just perfect! How could you—I didn't know you—"

He kissed her gently.

"Oh, you mean knowing how to get the right things—colors and all"—he waved an inclusive hand at the exquisite harmony of hangings and furnishings in the living rooms visible through a door the children had left open. "Well, I can't take credit for that. Heaven only knows I haven't any taste. It was just my luck that teacher who boarded with us last winter was down visiting somebody in Gulfside, and I brought her out a few times while the carpenters and decorators were working, to give me a few suggestions about the built-in things, and the colors—you know those things a man couldn't be sure about. And the furniture, too. The day she went to San Antonio to buy her wedding clothes—yes, she's going to be married next week, and I pity the man—I met her up there to get her to help me pick the furniture. She came

out here and helped arrange it yesterday, too. Rattle-brained little thing, but she does know what's what about things like that. Gee, I was grateful to her, for I wanted everything just right for you. Tell me, Helen, is everything right? Do you like it?"

"Like it? Oh, John, John!" She knew, of course, he knew it was right, and that she did like it, but only wanted to hear her say it again. She put her cheek against his. How sweet life was! Not only the new house—she would take in the wonder of that after a while—but life itself, just being with John. And because her heart was so full she had no words to tell of it. She spoke only of commonplace things.

"What's that gritty stuff on your coat, John?"

"Oh, that? That's crushed oyster shell. I'm having the back yard shelled—all the way out to the chicken house. The school teacher thought I ought to plant grass there. But that's one thing I didn't follow her advice on. I remembered you were afraid of snakes in the grass."



**H**ow much does a promise mean to you? Would you give up wealth and luxury just to keep your word? Judith faced that issue. . . Read how she met it in **"Honor,"** by Mary Spain Vigus. It will begin soon in LOVE STORY MAGAZINE. . . . .



# *A Lovable Lady*

*By*

## *Ethel Donoher*

WHAT is she like?" Carter Westly asked, passing back his cup for more tea.

"She's adorable. You'll like her at once; everybody does."

"Fine! I'm glad she's coming, and equally glad I happened to drop in this afternoon. Tell me honestly, Jessica, just what chance I have of making a hit with her? I do like new and beautiful ladies."

Jessica Langdon's dark brows knitted thoughtfully.

"I wouldn't say Lillian was exactly beautiful," she admitted. "In fact, I don't suppose she's beautiful at all, but she has something far more important."

"Character?" Carter inquired politely, but with diminished enthusiasm.

"Why—no—that is, of course, she has character, plenty of it, but that was not what I referred to."

"No," Molly, her sister, cut in from the window seat. "Jess means that Lillian has charm enough to knock you completely out, instead of just stunning you."

"Exactly," Jessica agreed calmly. "I wouldn't be surprised if that was just what she did."

"My word!" Carter turned to Molly. "Is she really as dangerous as all that?"

"Yes, in her own way. She'll walk into this room as quietly as a small mouse, and both you men will find yourselves staring at her as though you had never seen a woman before."

"Both of us?" the man beside Molly inquired lazily.

He was a tall, dark man, older by some years than the other occupants of the living room. His mouth was slightly quizzical and his eyes, neither blue nor gray, but a dark combination of both, were deep set and for some reason baffling. Women were given to staring into them as long as the occasion permitted, wondering what was going on in the mind behind them.

And yet it must be admitted that women were rarely encouraged to gaze deeply into David Moore's eyes. Not one of his most inaccurate enemies could accuse him of philandering. He

had fancied himself in love several times, but he had never seen a woman who could not have departed from his section of the world without permanently darkening it.

Needless to say, women adored him.

And most particularly did Molly Langdon adore him. Molly was just eighteen, vivid, impetuous, and not a little spoiled. Even the female population of Austmore admitted she was the prettiest girl for miles around; that there had, in fact, never been any one to compare with her.

Molly agreed with them. Without undue vanity she knew that her sister Jessica's coloring had been intensified in herself with more effective results. Jessica's hair and eyes were brown; Molly's were black. Besides, Molly's hair was curly, and, of course, it was bobbed.

Now she smiled at David Moore as though she was pretty sure of him. And one could not blame her too much. Sooner or later men always succumbed to Molly.

"Yes," she assured him lightly, "both you and Carter will find yourselves falling all around the place when Lillian has been in this room about ten minutes, and you won't know exactly why."

David's lips twitched.

"I'd hate to spoil your scene, Molly," he assured her lazily, "but I'm afraid I'm going to. Somehow I can't picture myself falling all around the place just on account of any one's presence."

"Any woman, you mean," she corrected him. "Well, we'll see. Lillian is not only capable of combining modernism with manners which even our grandmothers would have considered perfect, but she's a widow. And widows have a canny way of managing men, David, my dear."

Jessica glanced swiftly toward her.

"Don't speak that way, Molly. It sounds as though you thought Lillian tried to create the impression she does."

He sister looked wicked.

"Well," she drawled, "the woman's human. But I'll say this for her: she doesn't attempt anything beyond her powers. Even her flirtations are artless."

"Lillian never flirted with any one in her life!" Jessica's mild brown eyes flashed. "Even before she married she was never frivolous, and since her husband's death, years ago, she has been very quiet."

"Was she so tremendously in love with her husband?" Carter inquired. Carter was always curious.

"No," frankly from Molly, "I don't think she was in love with him at all. It was this way: Lillian was born in Scotland and lived there until she was fourteen. Her parents died shortly after, and she came over to America to live with her mother's sister. Three years later she met Fergus Craig, a Scotchman, who lived near her aunt. And Lillian, as I have intimated, is quiet but mighty. She bowled Fergus over at sight. I think she must have married him mostly because her aunt wanted her to, and because there was no real reason why she shouldn't. Her husband died of pneumonia a year later and left her a rich and fascinating widow. There you have the whole story."

"And how did you happen to know her?" Again Carter was the interlocutor.

"Jessica went to boarding school with her——" Molly paused.

The bell had pealed sharply. There was the sound of an opening door, of a sweet, rich voice in the hall.

Jessica sprang to her feet.

"There she is!"

Almost at once the portieres were swept aside and a small woman stood in the doorway. She wore a sable coat and a close-fitting black hat. In the fur at her neck was a cluster of hot-house violets.

The Langdon girls darted across the room. Questions and exclamations, punctuated by kisses, cut through the air. Jessica lead the visitor forward, and presented the two men.

Carter's first thought was in agree-

She thanked Carter with a smile. Immediately he slipped into the vacant seat beside her.

Again Molly looked wicked.

"Do you want more tea, Carter, dear?" she asked with sweet surprise.



"There she is!"

Almost at once the portieres were swept aside and a small woman stood in the doorway.

ment with Jessica. No! Lillian Craig was not beautiful. David's impression included only the two bluest eyes he had ever seen and the scent of violets.

But it was Carter who drew forward a chair for the newcomer. This when she had removed her coat and had admitted she would like a cup of tea.

"Please," was the polite response. "But don't you know that nice little girls never ask their guests to have more of anything? Had you been a perfect hostess you would have conveyed the impression that this was my first cup."

"But it really is your third, isn't it?" Molly inquired with interest. She

added: "Have a sandwich, Lillian, before he empties the plate."

"Indeed I shall. I'm frightfully hungry."

The words were ordinary enough, but they were clipped with a Scotch accent which Carter found distinctly intriguing. He had been quite right, he concluded at this point, in agreeing with Jessica. He still thought the newcomer was not beautiful, but found her far more effective than that.

"It's wonderful to have you here, Lillian," Jessica said earnestly. "I'm not going to let you go until after the wedding."

"But my dear, you aren't going to be married until June. That's almost four months away. I couldn't possibly stay that long."

"And why not? You haven't a thing in the world to take you home. We'll have so much to plan. I want you to be my matron of honor, and Molly's to be the maid of honor. That was Paul's idea. Wasn't he clever?"

"Very," Lillian agreed. "And I shall love being your matron of honor, Jessica. How is Paul? Doesn't he drink tea?"

"Not often," her hostess returned with a smile. "He works all day."

Carter looked plaintive.

"You make me feel like a loafer, young woman," he complained.

"Well," serenely, "you are one. But David isn't." Jessica glanced approvingly at the silent man before the open fire.

Lillian, too, glanced toward him. She found his eyes fixed upon her with unwavering scrutiny. It was slightly disconcerting. She looked away.

"Oh, no, Jessica, my child"—Carter spoke with fine irony—"David never loaf! He's a lawyer. My, how he does work, the little lamb!"

"Well," Molly interposed, "he does work too! He looks awfully tired sometimes."

Carter clapped his hand to his head, and groaned deeply.

"Oh, the poor darling! David, why didn't you tell me you got tired at times? This is terrible!"

"Don't you think you're funny?" Molly regarded him loftily. "Regular little life-of-the-party, aren't you? Well, I'll tell you right now, Lillian can't stand clowns."

The grin was instantly wiped from Carter's face. He turned to the woman beside him.

"Is that true?" he asked solemnly. "Do you prefer earnest-minded men?"

Lillian looked amused.

"Not necessarily. They all have their place, do they not?"

"Yes," dryly from Molly, "but they don't keep it."

David came forward.

"You mustn't mind these children, Mrs. Craig," he said pleasantly. "They always fight when they're together. Of course it isn't Molly's fault. Carter just makes her that way." He extended his hand. "It was great to see you, after hearing Jessica speak of you so often. I hope they can persuade you to remain until after the wedding."

"Scarcely that," Lillian responded, as his fingers closed over hers, "but I'll come back in time to be the matron of honor."

Molly's gaze followed David's tall form crossing the room. Her eyes were reflective.

Early the next morning a box of flowers arrived for Mrs. Fergus Craig. Molly brought them into the dining room, where Jessica and their visitor were still at breakfast.

"Some flowers for you," she announced laconically.

"For me?" Lillian seemed surprised.

She opened the box, disclosing a cluster of long stemmed pink roses, and extricated a card from the tangle of smilax.

"To assure you of your welcome to Austmore, Carter Payne Westly," she read aloud. "Why, how very nice of him!"

Molly, whose expression up to this point had been somewhat sullen, looked immensely relieved.

"I knew Carter would fall for you hard," she said teasingly. "In fact, I told him he would."

"Molly! How absurd of you!" Plainly Lillian was annoyed. "What must he have expected? And how frightfully disappointed he must have been."

Jessica smiled at her from across the table.

"It doesn't look as though he was exactly disappointed." She indicated the roses.

"But, my dear, the poor man evidently realized that something was expected of him, if Molly talked as foolishly as it seems she did."

"She said the same thing to David, too, but of course he—" Jessica paused.

"Oh, David doesn't count," Molly said hastily. "He never cares much for women. I was only teasing him."

And yet it was David who arrived that very afternoon in a low, gray roadster, and begged the visiting lady to go for a drive.

"It's a corking day, almost like spring," he pleaded. "You could bundle up well, and we wouldn't go far enough for you to get cold. Don't you think she'd like the view from the cliff road, Jessica?"

"I'm sure she would," was the obliging response. "Go on, dear. We haven't a thing to do this afternoon. I shan't be lonely because Paul is coming—it's Saturday, you know. And even Molly won't be back from town until late."

Perhaps as she watched Lillian drive away beside David—snugly wrapped in her fur coat and tucked in with numer-

ous robes—Jessica was glad in her secret heart that Molly would not be home until very near dinner time.

David had not exaggerated. It was a glorious day. Lillian enjoyed the drive tremendously, and she liked the man beside her. He looked so quiet, almost somber, until he smiled; then his face lighted in a way which was singularly attractive.

As for David, he had never been so happy before in his life. His companion's clipped, delightful little accent, her piquant profile, her deep-blue eyes—all these things were weaving a spell which David was to find intractable.

As they were returning, he spoke impulsively.

"I hope you will be good enough to go with me again some day soon, Mrs. Craig; and perhaps we could all go into town some night for dinner and the theater."

"That's awfully nice of you," Lillian assured him. "I think the people of Austmore are delightful to strangers; perhaps you are all born hosts."

"Oh, no," he retorted quickly, "I'm not trying to be hospitable, or not just that. You see I—I so tremendously like being with you."

She considered this. How—how very personal he was! Could it be possible he had concluded from Molly's nonsense that something of this sort was expected of him?

Of course men were usually complimentary to all women—every one knew that. One didn't even need to be a beauty. Certainly she wasn't. Still, this David Moore was growing personal too quickly for it to be spontaneous. Oh, why had Molly said all those silly things? Maybe he considered her a—a sort of vampire. Merciful Heaven! How awful! Well, at least she could counteract any such impression. She could show him she was not pleased.

And this Lillian proceeded to do. As they drew up before the Langdon house

she spoke distantly. Even the piquant accent in her voice failed to soften it.

"Thank you so much for making all those thoughtful plans. But naturally it would be impossible for me to make any arrangements before consulting Jessica."

David followed her into the house, miserably conscious of having offended her.

Molly ran out into the hall to meet them.

"Hello," she said coolly. "Have a nice drive?"

"Very," from Lillian. "I'm afraid we're a little late."

"Yes, you are, but of course it doesn't matter. David"—her tone was peremptory—"you are to stay for dinner. Paul and Carter will be here."

"I'm afraid—" David began, and paused.

Molly had stamped her foot.

"If you don't stay I'll never speak to you again—never!"

"Well, really—if it's as important as all that, perhaps I'd better."

Lillian moved toward the stairway.

"I'll go right up to my room and change," she flung over her shoulder.

As she mounted the stairs her slim, dark brows were drawn together. What a spoiled child Molly was! She flew into a rage unless she was instantly given way to in even the most trivial thing. What difference could it make to any of them whether or not David Moore remained for dinner? Really Molly needed discipline, and so, it appeared, did David Moore.

David's discipline began at the moment when a slim little woman in a dinner gown of jade green, with her soft, ash-blond hair brushed away from her blue eyes, and falling into natural waves, swept into the living room. For Lillian responded sweetly—oh, so sweetly—to Carter Westly's greeting, and gave him her entire attention until dinner was announced.

At dinner she sat between Carter and Paul Salters, Jessica's fiancé, a jovial, blond young man whom Lillian had met before, and liked tremendously. She talked very little to Paul, for Carter kept her well occupied. David appeared to have been completely forgotten.

Back in the living room she allowed Carter to take the place beside her on a settle near the fire. David took his old position on the hearth rug, and almost immediately he asked Jessica to sing.

Lillian turned to her friend.

"Oh, please, do, dear. I haven't heard you sing for ages."

Jessica arose at once and went to the piano.

"What shall it be?"

"Spring's a Lovable Ladye," David said quickly.

A minute later nimble fingers ran through the prelude, and a clear, flexible soprano flooded the old living room.

"Spring's a lovable ladye, dear,  
And so are you;  
Rather apt to coquette, I fear,  
But so are you.  
Conscious though of her gown of green  
And blossom bonnets, too,  
But spring's a lovable ladye, dear,  
And so are you."

The lilting air rippled on between verses. Lillian leaned back against the settle. She was keenly aware of the fact that David's eyes were fixed steadily upon her. But of course, she reasoned, she needn't let him see that she noticed it.

Jessica began the second verse:

"Summer surely was made for bliss,  
And so were you.  
Lips were fashioned to smile and kiss,  
And so were you.  
Flowers appear in their best of frocks  
And frills of every hue;  
For summer surely was made for bliss,  
And so were you."

This time, as the connecting bars flowed on without words, David's eyes

were holding the blue ones that looked out from the settle.

The last verse began with a haunting, minor strain:

"Autumn days no promise hold  
Sometimes, nor do you.  
Winter nights are sad and cold,  
Sometimes so are you.  
But winter's gone and spring is here  
And all the sky is blue;  
And spring's a lovable ladye, dear,  
And so are you."

"That was beautiful," Paul said, as the last chord died away. "You sang even better than usual to-night, dear."

Jessica arose from the piano with a smile.

"Did you like it, Lillian?"

"Very much," her guest replied quietly. "It's a lovely thing. And Paul is quite right, your voice has improved marvelously."

How was it possible to speak like that? she wondered. Her voice had sounded much as usual, and yet her heart was beating rapidly, and her throat was dry. What had happened to her? She looked steadily down at the rug before her, avoiding the deep-set eyes that had so recently, and so significantly, burned into her own. What a strange man this David Moore was! If he had only been acting, he had done it remarkably well.

Carter found her, during the remainder of the evening, vaguely inattentive to his witticisms. But Carter, too, had been facing David during the song, and Carter missed very little that was going on about him.

"There's no use," he thought ruefully. "If old David is stirring himself to win out, I might just as well fade from the picture. Dave's deadly enough when he doesn't make an effort."

It was quite evident that now, for the first time in his life, David was making a valiant effort to win his lady. Before he said good night he drew Lillian aside, and took up the conversation just where he had left it that afternoon.

"Won't you promise to go for a drive with me again, some day soon?"

He did have nice eyes, she noted, and smiled up at him with sudden confidence.

"I should like to," she responded, as Molly joined them.

The next afternoon more flowers arrived for Lillian. This time it was Jessica who brought them to her in the living room. Molly, too, was there. She sprang to her feet at sight of the box in her sister's hand.

"Who are they for?" she asked.

"For Mrs. Fergus Craig. Here you are, honey!" She laid the offering in her friend's lap.

Molly came forward.

"Oh, lovely!" she exclaimed, as Lillian removed the lid.

The long box was filled with lilies of the valley and violets.

"Where do you suppose they came from this time of the year?" Jessica asked, turning over the lid. "Let me see. Why—they were bought in Boston. Whoever sent it must have driven all the way in there."

"But you know who sent it," Molly said crisply. "Carter is the only man she knows here who ever sends flowers. What does he say this time?"

Lillian was drawing the card from its envelope.

"They aren't from Mr. Westly," she admitted.

"Not from Carter!" Molly's voice was a little shrill. "Then who sent them?"

"Mr. Moore."

"D-David! Why—how queer!"

"Don't be absurd!" Jessica spoke warningly. "Why is it queer? He has just as much right as Carter to send her flowers."

"Did he write anything on the card?" Molly asked.

Lillian glanced up from the bit of pasteboard in her hand.

"My dear," she observed lightly, "you're the most curious child I ever saw. I've told you who sent them. Isn't that enough?"

Her eyes traveled back to the words scribbled beneath the engraving. David had written:

"Spring's a lovable ladye—and so are you."

During the next two weeks Lillian fell in love. And this was easily the last thing she had ever expected would happen. Her married life had been brief and sadly lacking in romance; her husband had been dead eight years and during that time she had moved through her part of the world serenely, just a little remote. She had begun to fancy herself immune.

She was quite sincere when she scoffed at Molly for describing her as a charmer. She found nothing worthy of mention—certainly nothing to attract—when she gazed into her mirror. She detested a nose which tilted, and a short, curling upper lip. Of course she was accustomed to the Scotch accent, which reminded David of blue-purple moors, seen through a silver mist.

All things considered, Lillian thought herself rather plain, and she marveled at David's love. For he loved her, she knew it, although he had not said so.

It was easy enough now to understand why she had never cared for any man before, she had been waiting for David.

Lillian strongly suspected that her secret was no secret to Jessica, and she had concluded some time ago that Molly was no longer interested in her affairs. Molly was always capricious and tiresome, but of late she had been morose, at times even rude. Lillian only attributed it to the fact that Molly had been pretty thoroughly spoiled.

One afternoon late in February Jessica's young sister emerged from her unimportant place in the scheme of

things, and became suddenly a force which demanded recognition.

David had found Lillian alone in the living room, curled up on the Chesterfield before a blazing fire, reading. They had discussed her book, Jessica's approaching marriage, and several other unimportant subjects to them, when a silence settled down in the room.

It was a strange silence—most unquiet, for it seemed to sing in their ears all of the unsaid things which lay between them.

It had lasted until the air was fairly charged with feeling unexpressed. David reached down for the small hand that was tracing a pattern on the velours beside him.

"Darling," he began huskily, "I can't wait any longer. I must tell you—besides, you know anyway. I—" He paused, raised her hand, and held it close against his lips.

At exactly that minute the living room door swung open.

Lillian drew away her hand, and turned. David arose. Molly—a flushed-faced Molly with eyes oddly bright, stood on the threshold.

"David," she began somewhat breathlessly, "your secretary just telephoned that Mr. Austin is in town. He's going round to your office at once to see you about the Fulton estate."

David mumbled something which sounded derogatory to Mr. Austin.

"I'll have to go, I'm afraid," he told Lillian regretfully. "May I—see you to-night?"

"Yes"—her blue eyes met his squarely—"I'll be here, David."

When the door had closed behind him, Molly crossed the room like a vivid flash of fury, threw herself down in a corner of the Chesterfield, and burst into sobs.

Lillian sprang to her feet, and bent over her.

"My dear, what is it? Molly, tell me! What has happened?"

"Oh, I can't bear it!" came back in ruffled tones. "I can't, can't bear it!"

"What, dear, what can't you bear?"

"You and—and David."

"But"—Lillian looked bewildered—"what do you mean, child?"

"I didn't know you cared for David, or that he ever—loved you."

"Well, you know it now. What are you going to do about it? He did care before you came, and if you weren't here he'd care again. Oh, Lillian"—



Molly sat up, making no effort to restrain her tears.

"I mean you're taking him from me—that's what I mean. He loved me before you came—he did, he *did*!"

The older woman closed her eyes; a faint nausea was creeping over her. She forced herself to speak evenly.

her voice broke pitifully—"I love him so much! I can't live without him—really I can't. You've had one husband. Why isn't one enough for any woman? Besides, you have everything else, too—money, position—and if you really want to marry again you wouldn't have trouble finding another man."

Mrs. Craig's cheeks were brightly flushed.

"You are encouraging, Molly," she admitted dryly. "But I can assure you that I have wasted no time in my life looking for a husband."

"Oh," wailed the girl, "I've made you angry! And that's just the thing I shouldn't do. If only I could make you understand!"

"I understand clearly enough. How could I fail to? You love David and—because you think he cares for me—you want me to go away."

"But I've never loved anybody else," was the quick response, "and I never



Molly, with eyes oddly bright, stood on the threshold.

will, so long as I live. And I'm so very young. Think of all the years I would have before me—to go on loving him, without hope."

Lillian regarded the tear-stained face thoughtfully. Her eyes softened. Yes, it was quite true Molly was so young. She looked now like a little girl whose favorite doll had been crushed into small bits at her feet.

After all, if David had loved this child first, what right had any one to take him away from her? Wouldn't the memory of Molly's stricken, dark eyes come between any woman and the happiness David might bring her?

"Very well," she said quietly, "I'll go away and it would be better to go at once. I—I'd rather not see David again. I'll leave a note for him, and one for Jessica. When she comes in will you tell her I received a telegram which called me home on business?"

A transformed Molly smiled up at her.

"Oh, yes, indeed I will. I'll say you simply had to make the four thirty train. But"—her eyes clouded—"you'll have to come back for the wedding. If you didn't, Jessica would suspect something right off. I'd have an awful time with her. Besides she'd be so terribly disappointed, if you weren't here."

"I'll come," Lillian promised absentmindedly. "I need only stay one night. Certainly I would do more than that for Jessica."

She crossed to a desk near the window, seated herself, and began her first letter.

DEAR MR. MOORE: I have been called home on business, and I am leaving on the four thirty train this afternoon.

After all, the message I received hastens my departure by only a few days. I had decided this morning to leave at the end of the week.

Please believe that I deeply appreciate all your efforts to make my visit in Austmore a very delightful one. Sincerely yours,

LILLIAN CRAIG.

Molly spoke suddenly.

"I've just thought of something! David will follow you! I can't expect him to turn back to me in a day."

"It won't matter if he does follow. He won't find me. I shall go for the present to a little cottage I have in the country." Lillian addressed an envelope and handed it to Molly. "Give this to David, please. Now I'll write to Jessica."

Molly turned the envelope over in her fingers, her eyes downcast.

"You've been wonderful about this," she said slowly. "I suppose I'm an awful creature to ask it of you. If only you could know what he means to me!"

Lillian gazed steadily down at the gray note paper before her. If only she knew what David could mean to a woman! Did the child suppose she was devoid of feeling?

She was more than unhappy.

It was summer when Lillian came again to Austmore. The June sun was slanting across the well-remembered living room, which was empty at the moment of her arrival. There were great bowls of Dorothy Perkins roses on the tables and in the open windows. The place was beginning to look festive, although it was two days before the wedding.

Lillian sank down on the Chesterfield, remembering with a swift little stab of pain the last time she had sat there. She drew her hand wearily across her eyes.

Swift footsteps sounded in the hall, and Jessica came into the room.

"My dear, have you been ill?" she inquired, when the first greetings were over. "You're so pale and, yes, you are much thinner."

Lillian brushed this aside.

"There isn't a thing in the world the matter with me. Tell me all the news, and show me your presents. I've brought an adorable blue frock, just the shade we decided upon to go with Molly's. By the way, how is Molly?"

"Awfully well, as usual, and tremendously in love—also as usual."

Lillian smoothed the gloves on her lap.

"Is she—very happy?"

"Rather! Did she tell you about it?"

"Yes, she told me. Are they engaged?"

"Oh, yes. They're going to be married in September. Why, honey, you look positively ill! Are you frightfully tired, or what is it?"

Lillian forced a smile to her lips.

"I am tired. I think I'll rest a little before dinner, if you don't mind—"

"Lillian!" a voice exclaimed from the doorway. "How nice!" Molly came forward, and bestowed a butterfly kiss on the cheek of the newcomer. "I suppose Jessica has told you every speck of the news, and left nothing for me to report."

"She has told me of your approaching marriage," Lillian returned. "I hope you'll be very, very happy, Molly."

"Oh, I'm sure to be! Jig's the most wonderful man on earth."

For a second Lillian stared at her; then:

"Jig?" she repeated blankly.

"Why, yes—Jig Baldwin. I've only known him two months; he's Carter Westly's cousin. But I thought you said Jessica had told you."

"She—she told me you were going to be married in September. I thought of course—you were marrying David."

Molly had the grace to blush; her laugh was constrained. She began an explanation.

"Oh—David! Yes, I did like him last winter, but of course that was nothing to compare with what I feel for Jig. I've never really loved any man before, and I could never, never care for any one else."

Jessica's watchful eyes were on her friend's pale face.

"To my certain knowledge," she remarked dryly, "Molly has said that about exactly six men. First there was Walter Bayes, then Bob, then—"

"I never did!" her sister broke in hotly, storm clouds gathering in her dark eyes. "I may have had—well, sort of cases on those boys, and—and on David, but they were all just incidents. Jig is entirely different. I—why, I couldn't live without Jig!"

"All right," ironically from Jessica. "Have it your own way. But considering the fact that Jig is deeply in love with you, I wouldn't advise him to introduce any new men, between now and September, unless he's willing to run the chance of becoming just another incident in your life."

Mechanically Lillian arose and moved toward the window. The room had grown suddenly stifling. Her head felt light and her hands numb.

The voice of the Langdon girls behind her beat a sharp accompaniment to her confused thoughts. She had given David up because Molly had said she couldn't live without him, and because she had been so young and pitiful in her grief. Now it seemed that Molly had talked that way about a number of men, and she had admitted that David was only an incident.

Lillian caught her breath. An incident! Oh, he hadn't been that to her!

The soft June breeze fanned her hair back against the close-fitting hat covered with silk violets, otherwise she might have been a modish figure in a shop window. She was so motionless.

What could she do? she wondered. Nothing—nothing at all. David had secured her address from Jessica, and had followed her home. But she wasn't there. She had learned about it later from his letters, which she never answered. She could not explain by telling him the plain truth about Jessica's sister—that much was certain.

She recalled Molly's tears.

A spasm of pain crossed her face. Oh, Molly! shallow, cruel, heartless little Molly! how could you?

She was about to turn from the window when she became suddenly aware that another voice had joined in the conversation behind her. It was a voice she remembered as clearly as though it spoken to her just yesterday. Then quick footsteps crossed the living room.

Lillian stiffened; her hand flew to her throat in a helpless little gesture of indecision. As the footsteps drew nearer she made a valiant effort to regain her usual poise, and turned to find Jessica and Molly had left her alone with David!

He caught both her hands in his, and looked down at her steadily.

"Why did you run away from me?" he asked. "And, having run away, why did you hide?"

"I—why—I was in the country."

Her words came slowly.

"Why didn't you answer my letters?" His grip on her hands tightened. "You knew I loved you; knew I adored you."

"You—never said you did." Her heart was beating so hard that it sounded in her own ears like the thud of an African drum. Surely he could hear it! He would think—he would know she was hoping he had continued to love her!

"It doesn't matter what I left unsaid," David responded grimly. "You knew exactly how I felt. Why—I never supposed it would be possible to love any woman as I love you! It's been rather a blow—under the circumstances. I—I can't forget you, no matter how I try. That isn't your fault, of course, but you could have told me honestly that you didn't care—instead of running away from the situation."

He still loved her! Lillian was trying to grasp this fact when she became aware that her eyes were focused on the piano—on a single sheet of music, to be exact.

She drew her hands from David's, crossed the room, and lifted from the piano rack Jessica's song—"Spring's a

Lovable Ladye." She opened it at random.

Lips were fashioned to smile and kiss—  
And so were you.

Lillian reached impulsively for the pencil which was lying near beside a bridge score. She drew it through one of the printed lines of the song, wrote rapidly above it, and handed it to David.

"There!" she exclaimed, facing him a trifle breathlessly. "Now will you say I run away from situations? Read that second verse."

And David read:

Summer surely was made for bliss,  
And so were you.  
Lips were fashioned to smile and kiss—

Here the next line had been penciled out. In its place Lillian had written:

And so was I!

For a second he could only stare at her, hardly daring to believe what her message implied. Then he knew.

"Breath of my heart!" David's lips whispered against hers. "I can't believe it! Is it true? Tell me—tell me!" he pleaded.

"Well"—Lillian slipped her arm about his neck—"of course that conceited thing I wrote about having been fashioned to smile and kiss isn't true. I meant that I was fashioned for you to kiss—David. And, oh, my dear, it's true that I love you!"



### THE SINGLE HOLLYHOCK

HOLLYHOCKS! Silken frocks!  
Silken frocks of pink and cream,  
Silver-hued, like purling stream;  
Purest white! Is she a bride?  
Lavender! Has her love died?  
Gowns of red for small brunettes;  
Yellow gowns for gay coquettes.

Hollyhocks! Goldilocks  
Says they dress that way to dance.  
She one night, by happy chance,  
Lured by scent of mignonette,  
Saw them in a minuet.  
Ladies, in their long full skirts,  
Not like modern dancing flirts.

Hollyhocks! Four o'clocks  
Keep the time for their affairs;  
They are never late at prayers!  
Bending low each reverent head  
At what Jack-in-the-pulpit said,  
They are strictly orthodox—  
All my rows of hollyhocks!

ROSE M. BURDICK.



# Betrayed

By  
*Georgette MacMillan*

**I**N the kitchen of a small New York flat a girl sat mending stockings.

The evening was cold, but there was no heat in the room, which, though clean, was comfortless. Marjory Lane looked pale and tired as she worked at the pile of darning.

Her weariness could not disguise the fact that she was extremely pretty. She was very fair, and her thick hair was bright and shining. She smiled a little to herself. Despite her hard lot in this dismal flat, she had pleasant thoughts. Her dreams were of the Prince Charming who had lately come into her life.

Marjory Lane was the drudge of this small, mean flat, where she lived with an uncle and aunt, a close-fisted, miserly couple who seemed to grudge her her very food. She had been left with them some years before by her father, who had gone away in the hope of making a fortune.

He had never returned, but Marjory had gone on waiting and waiting. Her uncle and aunt had made their niece scrub floors and darn stockings, and lead a life that held little else but hard work.

Marjory rarely complained—she knew it was useless. More than once she had tried to get other work, but her

uncle and aunt had prevented her from doing so.

Of late she had not thought much about finding fresh employment. She had her secret hopes and dreams. She smiled as her shining needle ran in and out of the stocking on her hand.

Suddenly she started and lifted her fair head to listen. In the distance her quick ears had heard the sound of a familiar step.

A mailman was coming up the street. Perhaps he would have a letter for her! Usually Rupert mailed his letters to her so that they were delivered in the morning—so that she would be able to take them in as she cleaned the steps before breakfast. But it had sometimes happened that his letters arrived by special delivery in the evening.

Her uncle and aunt were both out. She jumped up and ran to the front door, a slim, lithe figure in her ill-fitting dress. As she opened the door the mailman came up the path.

"For you," he said, and put a letter into her hand. She thanked him and went back to the kitchen, hugging the thick envelope to her heart.

It was from Rupert Bronson. He was the only person who ever wrote to her.

She tore open the envelope and read her precious love letter.

**DARLING LITTLE GIRL:** It was very sweet to meet you the other evening and I am most anxious to do so again when the dragons are safely out of the way. Not that they will matter very long, sweetheart, for soon

I am coming to ask your uncle to give you to me. If he refuses, I shall take you just the same.

Remember, you have promised to give yourself to no other man but me, and I shall claim you as soon as you are twenty-one, if not before. In the meantime, darling, I send you heaps of love and kisses, and remain, as ever,

Your own, RUPERT.

"What does this mean?" cried a harsh voice behind her.

Her uncle's hand, coming over her shoulder, pounced on her precious letter and snatched it away. She had been so absorbed in reading it that she had not heard him enter the flat and come to the kitchen. She jumped up in alarm.

"Uncle, that is my letter! You've no right to take it from me."

"Haven't I? We'll see about that," said Thomas Read, looking at the girl with a furious glare in his eyes. He had a mean face, the face of a bully, and cruel, thin lips.

"How dare you receive letters without my knowledge and consent? Who sent you this letter?" he cried.

"A friend of mine," she said bravely.

With a sneer on his lips he opened the sheet he had crushed in his hand and looked at the signature. The fury in his eyes increased as he looked at her.

"Rupert! So you have a lover of whom we know nothing? Who is this man? Tell me his name quickly!"

"I am not ashamed to tell you. It is Rupert Bronson," she said coldly.

"How long have you known him? Where did you meet him?" he fumed.

"I was nearly knocked down by a car in the street one day, and he brought me to the corner in his motor cycle," she said in a low voice. "Why are you angry, uncle? Why may I not have a friend as other girls do? I have no one, and it has made me so happy to know Rupert. I wanted to tell you, but I was sure you would be angry. Rupert wants to see you——"

"You shameless creature!" cried

Mary Read as she entered the kitchen. She had heard all, and she looked as disturbed as her husband. "To meet a man secretly and receive letters from him! Are you not ashamed of yourself, Marjory Lane?"

"No," said Marjory, lifting her head.

"You should be, you wicked creature!" cried her aunt.

"That is enough," interjected Thomas Read. "She'll see him no more, that is certain. We'll not argue with you, Marjory. But you'll never see your lover again, and you'll live to thank us one day for saving you from him. He is a scamp and is after no good, I'm certain."

"Why do you say that?" she asked.

"Look in the glass and answer yourself," he said brutally. "What are you but a poor girl, and nothing to look at, at that? If you think your fine lover means to marry you, you're sadly mistaken. Go to your bedroom. I'll talk to you again in the morning."

Marjory flushed. She had often marveled why Rupert should have picked her out of all the girls the world held, but it was hard to hear her own thoughts uttered so callously.

"I will not believe ill of Rupert. I'll never give him up," she said.

"You'll leave here to-morrow morning early, and I'll put you in a place where he will not be able to find you," said the old man with a harsh laugh. "They want a servant at a reformatory I know. They'll keep you under observation, and there'll be no meetings. I'll take you there myself."

He pushed her before him with a brutal hand till he reached her bedroom. He thrust her within and locked the door with a last, savage threat.

He went back into the kitchen where his wife waited, and the pair looked at each other in silence for a few moments. The old man threw down the letter.

"Here is nice trouble, Mary!" he said.

"Do you think he knows, Tom?" asked his wife.

"Of course he knows. Would he be running after her if he didn't? He says they'll be married when she is twenty-one. He knows, although I've kept the secret so carefully. He'll marry her, and we shall lose the money. And I've kept her hidden and worked her like a servant all this time, so that

Mary Read nodded her head vigorously. She and her husband were lost to all emotions save greed for gold. They knew that Marjory's father had found that fortune he went to seek. When dying far away he had made a will in which he left it all to come to his little girl upon her marriage.

In the meantime Tom Read was to look after her and the money, too.



"What does this mean?" cried a harsh voice behind Marjory.

nobody should ever guess! Was there ever such ill luck?"

"Who is he, Tom?"

"Rupert Bronson, she called him. He is some fortune-hunting scamp, of course. We'll have to get her away, Mary."

"But how? If she won't go——"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"There are ways and means," he continued. "Jane Evison, the matron at the reformatory, will take her in and see that she doesn't escape. I shall tell Jane that she needn't be too tender-hearted to the girl. It is the only way, Mary."

Tom was a miser at heart and had looked after that money so well that he could not bring himself to part from it.

When Marjory married he would lose the guardianship of the money. This he dreaded. He decided that she was to go away and be hidden from sight forever!

"How dared he?" cried Marjory passionately.

She was shut up in her room and was angry at the loss of her letter.

Her thoughts turned to Rupert. They would send her away. She had heard the threat before, and knew of

the terrors that might await her at the reformatory where the hard-faced matron was a friend of her aunt. She had heard of that reformatory so often, and knew that though she would be the servant, escape or freedom would be out of the question.

"I won't go! I'll never go!" she said, and she thought of Rupert Bronson, from whom she would be parted forever. She would never be able to write to him or see him again if her uncle had his way.

"I won't go! I'll go to Rupert," she thought. She rushed to the door and turned the handle. To her surprise the door came open. Tom Read had locked it, but he had forgotten that the lock was weak. Though the key turned, it did not fasten the door.

Marjory closed it again gently, but her heart throbbed with excitement. The way to escape lay open if only she could avoid attracting the attention of her uncle and aunt.

She listened carefully. They were talking in the kitchen and the door was closed. They were both slightly deaf, and Marjory was quick and light in all her movements. Now was her time to escape!

She put on her coat and hat and took her shoes in her hand. In stocking feet she crept along till she reached the front door. She opened it noiselessly and slipped out.

Marjory knew where Rupert lived. He had told her often of the evenings he spent alone, dreaming of her. She decided to go to him. She trusted him implicitly and knew he would welcome her eagerly. They would be married as soon as possible, and she would be safe from her uncle.

With her heart beating fast she turned westward. She must walk, for she had no money.

Rupert lived in a smart block of bachelor flats. The entrance door was open, but a man in livery lounged in

the hall. He stared in surprise at Marjory when she asked for Rupert Bronson.

"Mr. Bronson lives in No. 7," he said, with a jerk of his head. "But he is out, and he'll be late. He always is."

"I can wait," said Marjory.

"You can't wait here. I'm just off duty, and I'm going to put the lights out and go home. The gentlemen let themselves in. You can't wait in the hall," the man said.

Marjory was weary and exhausted.

"I must see him," she said earnestly. "It is most important. I've come a long way, and Mr. Bronson is the only friend I have. I must see him."

The man was touched by her appeal, but obviously puzzled by the situation. He said roughly: "Take my advice and go back home—"

"I have no home," said Marjory, as she choked back a sob. "I am engaged to Mr. Bronson."

"Well, of course, that alters matters," said the man. "I have a key to Mr. Bronson's flat. I suppose the best thing I can do is to let you wait there."

"Oh, please do!" cried Marjory appealingly.

He led the way. Marjory puzzled him. Her plight touched him, also, and he hoped in his secret heart that everything was all right.

Marjory had never a doubt. She looked around Rupert's sitting room with a thrill of delight. This was where he lived—where he sat and thought of her and dreamed of the days to come. She could picture him. How surprised he would be when he saw her there! Surprised and delighted, of course!

She sat down to wait. Marjory had no idea that it was wrong for her to wait in a man's rooms at eleven o'clock at night—she did not know that it was unwise for her to come to him. Yet a vague uneasiness stirred her.

Some instinct told her that she ought not to be there. She half rose,

though she had nowhere to go. The front door opened and she heard his voice. He was talking to some one, and she heard him telling his companion to come in.

Alarm filled Marjory's heart. She wanted to meet Rupert alone to explain.

"Do come in. There is something I must say to you," said Rupert in the hall outside. At the sound Marjory sprang up and went behind a tall screen that stood in the corner. She wanted to meet Rupert alone. She could not bear the eyes of a stranger.

Rupert came in. He was a handsome man, with clear-cut features and thick, waving hair. A closer observer than Marjory would have distrusted him, for his eyes were set a trifle too close together for honesty, and their look was shifty, while he had the mouth of a selfish and self-indulgent man.

Marjory was so young. She had had no experience. She could not judge character, especially when she was carried away by the glamour of love.

Rupert Bronson spoke with feeling as he flung off the light coat that covered his evening clothes.

"Cynthia!" he cried. "Just we two alone—as I have dreamed. Cynthia—Cynthia dear—"

His voice broke, and Marjory, looking through the hinge of the screen, saw that it was a girl who had accompanied him. She saw, also, that Rupert was holding her in his arms. She stood still, gazing up in horror, for Cynthia was amazingly beautiful.

She lay in Rupert's arms, her head on his shoulder. He gazed into her face adoringly. He kissed her, crying out her name.

"Foolish Rupert! What is the good of all this?" she whispered.

"How can I help being mad with love for you, Cynthia?" he said in a strange voice.

"But you are going to marry your

little girl who is an heiress, aren't you, dear? You must!"

"Don't talk to me of her!" he said savagely.

"I suppose she has the money?" she said anxiously.

"It is there all right. She doesn't know it. The old uncle is her guardian and has kept it to himself. It is hers at her marriage, anyway, though nobody seems to know the secret I stumbled upon. But how can I bear to marry her when it is you I love, Cynthia?"

"For the sake of the money, dear," she said.

"I shall spend it all on you," he cried.

"No, you won't," she said swiftly. "I must confess, too. I can't bear being poor, and you know it is no good going on like this. I am going to marry John Temple."

"You must not!" he cried fiercely.

"I must! Why not? He is rich, and you are going to marry the little drudge—"

"I'll throw her over if you say the word!" cried the man.

"I shan't say it. I hate poverty, and you have nothing but debts. This is our parting, Rupert."

"No, no! I can't bear it," he cried.

He took her into his arms again, kissing her lips, brow and cheeks, vowing he could never let her go.

Marjory stood like one turned to stone. She had to hear all, for she could not announce her presence. Shame stung her to the heart—shame that she had trusted this man, had come to his rooms at this hour, had believed in him.

All the time he was plotting to marry her for the sake of the money he believed she had, that he might give it to this girl he loved. And she had believed him a king among men!

She stood in agony, till at length Cynthia drew herself away from the



"Cynthia," Rupert cried. "Just we two alone—as I have dreamed. Cynthia—Cynthia dear——"

man who loved her and said she must go. They went to the door together. Marjory wondered what she should do, how she should greet him when he came back.

She realized dully that he had re-

turned. Again some one had followed him. A man's angry voice sounded.

"Bronson, listen to me. I know there has been a girl here with you. I live in the next flat, and the walls are thin. Was it Cynthia King?"



Marjory stood still, gazing in horror. Cynthia was amazingly beautiful.

"Is it anything to do with you, Temple?" said Bronson coldly. "It is rather caddish, if you ask me——"

"I know it sounds like that, but I can't help it," said Temple firmly. "I must know. I've heard whispers of

scandal about you and Cynthia." His voice was so full of pain that Marjory rose on tiptoe and looked through the crack in the screen at this man whose suffering was so much akin to her own. John Temple was a tall, powerfully

built young man, with frank, gray eyes and a face that inspired instinctive trust.

"I don't believe the rumors, but I must know. I thought I heard her voice. Is she here, Bronson? Tell me!"

Bronson shrugged his shoulders.

"She certainly is not," he retorted coolly.

"Was she here?" urged Temple.

Bronson was silent. He seemed to be weighing the claims of honor and jealousy. He did not want to reassure this man who cared for Cynthia King, but loyalty to Cynthia demanded that he should shield her.

"No, she wasn't," he said rudely, and then, as Temple still looked at him searchingly: "If you must know, Temple, it was my fiancée, Marjory Lane."

"Your fiancée, Marjory Lane," repeated Temple, and he looked at Bronson with eyes of scorn and loathing. "I asked you only to tell me that it was not Cynthia. Honor should have kept you silent as to the name of the girl, Bronson," he said scathingly. "A man of your experience should have known better than to permit your fiancée to visit your rooms at this hour," he added.

"Hang you, what business is it of yours?" said Bronson furiously. His mean spirit showed in his eyes as he looked jealously at the other man. "I shall bring my fiancée here if I like. And if you want to know, Temple, I could bring your fiancée here, too, if I chose at any time!"

He laughed. But that laugh and those sneering words were too much for John Temple. His fist shot out and caught Bronson on the point of the jaw, causing him to reel to the floor. In his fall he brought down a little table, and the table struck the screen.

It swayed and fell, revealing the girl behind it, with her terrified eyes and

pale, lovely face. For a moment Temple looked at her and she looked at him.

"Who are you?" he asked thickly.

"I am Marjory Lane!" she answered wearily.

"Marjory Lane!" repeated John Temple slowly. Then, half to himself, he added: "Bronson spoke the truth, then!"

Yet he did not feel the relief he might have been expected to experience at discovering that his suspicions of the girl to whom he was engaged had no foundation. Rather, he felt troubled. He knew Bronson had an unsavory reputation. To Temple's mind it was an ill thing that this slim, lovely girl, with the tragic, frightened eyes, should be in Bronson's rooms at this midnight hour.

Marjory, after that first, long glance, moved swiftly around the fallen screen and fell to her knees beside Rupert. He lay still and white, his eyes closed. She lifted terrified eyes to Temple's face.

"What have you done to him? You have killed him!" she cried.

"I haven't," said Temple shortly, after a brief glance at Bronson's face. "He'll be all right. I'll see to him. But what about you?" he said, looking at her again.

Marjory said nothing, though her lips quivered.

Within the past hour something dreadful had happened to her dream castle. Rupert was not the man she had thought he was. She had clothed him in dreams, and he himself had rudely awakened her.

She choked back a sob, and her eyes swam in tears. John Temple saw them and felt distressed. He said hurriedly:

"You must go home. You can safely leave Bronson in my hands. I'll look after him. But you must hurry away. You've no business to be here. Don't you know that?"

He spoke sternly, because it seemed the only way to arouse her. She looked at him with frightened eyes.

"I didn't know. I didn't stop to think. It seemed the only thing to do—to come to Rupert."

"Rupert should not have allowed you to stay an instant. At all events, you must go home now quickly."

"But I can't go," she said.

"Why not?" he asked.

"I've nowhere to go. I've run away, and I can't go back. I can't ever go back," she said, thinking of her uncle and aunt with a shiver of fear.

"Did Bronson bring you away?" he said sternly.

She shook her head.

"I came to him. Where else could I go? I know no one else."

"Good heavens!" he cried, and he stood staring at her for a moment in consternation. "What on earth is to happen to you?"

She did not answer. It did not seem to matter—nothing seemed to matter. She was thinking of Rupert holding a lovely girl in his arms and crying out that he loved her. What did anything matter beside that?

John Temple could not read her thoughts. Her apathy alarmed him. He looked again at Bronson. The man had not stirred, and it occurred to Temple that he might be more seriously hurt by his fall than he had at first supposed possible.

He laid his hand on Marjory's shoulder.

"Get up!" he said in authoritative tones that yet were kind and sympathetic. "I shall have to try and revive Bronson, and get a doctor to him if he needs one. You must understand that you can't stay here. It would be most unpleasant for you. You are sure there is no one to whom you can go for shelter?"

She shook her head.

"No one."

"Then you must go into my flat. It is only next door, and you will be safe there from prying eyes or gossiping tongues. You can trust yourself to me."

She looked at him for a moment in silence, then took the hand he offered with the simple trustfulness of a child and let him lead her away.

He left Marjory in his sitting room, and hastened back to Bronson's flat. Bronson was revived, and he leaned up on his elbow and looked at the other man with a glance of hate.

"You had better clear out of here, Temple. You've done enough damage," he said thickly.

"I assure you I have no desire to stay," retorted the other dryly. "But you deserve a thrashing, Bronson, nevertheless, and I should enjoy giving it to you."

"Mind your own business!" shouted Bronson furiously. "What on earth are my affairs to you?"

His hot rage was in contrast to the other man's coolness. Temple felt contempt for Rupert, but he had to admit that Bronson was right in one respect—his affairs were his own. Temple had no right to lecture him because his fiancée visited him late at night, however angry he might feel. Bronson was within his rights in bidding him mind his own business.

So, with an effort, he held his tongue and did not mention Marjory. He did not tell Bronson that he had sheltered the girl in his flat. He had already resolved to take her back to her friends if he could induce her to go. He changed the subject abruptly.

"Is there anything else I can do for you, Bronson?" he asked.

"Only take yourself off," growled the other.

Without further words Temple turned and left the room.

In the hall, near the front door, his eyes were attracted to something bright

that glimmered upon the door mat. He stooped and found a piece of jewelry—a delicate tracery of fine gold, set with diamonds and pearls. It looked like a pendant fallen from its chain and, supposing it to be Marjory's, he slipped it into his coat pocket, resolving to give it to her.

When he entered his sitting room he did not at first see the girl. He heard the sound of low sobbing. She was lying face downward on the sofa, her face buried in the cushion, her slim shoulders heaving. She was weeping as though her heart would break.

John Temple was a tender-hearted man, and the hopelessness of that pitiful figure could not but stir him. Her hat had fallen off. He smoothed her roughened, fair hair.

"Why are you crying?" he asked.

She sprang to her feet, tears streaming from her eyes, her face hidden in her hands.

She could not answer. She could not tell him of her heartache and misery. She had trusted Rupert so! He had been her whole life. She had dreamed such golden dreams.

He had never cared for her. He only planned to secure some money he supposed she had. All the time he loved that dark-haired girl he had held in his arms. Agony filled her heart as she remembered the tone in which he had uttered her name.

"I am going to take you home," said John. "I'll explain to your people as far as I can, and make everything all right. To-morrow things won't look half so bad. Come, dry your eyes."

"I can't go home," said Marjory. At that moment John's little clock struck one. Two hours had passed since Marjory had arrived at Rupert's flat. John heard the chime with consternation.

"I don't think you can, at this hour," he observed. He wondered what he should do. She had no one, it seemed, save Bronson, yet he recoiled from the

thought of leaving her with him. He knew Bronson was a scoundrel.

John's lips set firmly. He was in a difficult position, for, having traveled abroad for some years, he had no women friends in New York to whom he could intrust Marjory. There seemed only one thing to do.

He put his hand gently on her shoulder.

"You must stay here. That is the only thing you can do," he said briefly.

Her hands dropped, and she looked up at him mistily. It was a long, searching glance. No one could look at Temple thus and not know that he was absolutely trustworthy. Marjory, for all her innocence and inexperience, knew it.

She raised no protest.

A few minutes later she stood in the only bedroom in the little flat.

Temple, having carefully placed the key on her side of the door, threw himself down on the sofa in the sitting room—the sofa on which Marjory had wept her heart out a little while before. He thought of her as he lay there.

"Why is she so unhappy?" he asked himself. "She has run away from home to join Bronson, evidently, and now she fears that she has done wrong. Bronson must marry her, of course. I only hope he makes her happy."

He sighed and shook his head doubtfully.

In the bedroom Marjory was lying in hopeless misery, because she knew that never could she marry Rupert Bronson!

The next morning Temple rose early from his improvised bed and prepared breakfast.

Marjory rose and came out shyly while he was thus engaged. After they had had their simple meal he spoke to her frankly.

"I want to help you, Miss Lane," he said.

She looked up quickly and the vivid color dyed her cheeks. She looked very young, very appealing and remarkably pretty.

"I can't go home," she said in a low voice.

"I realize that it will be rather awkward. I presume that you and Bronson are going to be married?" he said.

"No! Oh, no, we are not," she said quickly.

"I gathered last night that you had run away from home to marry him."

She looked down with a burning blush.

"I had. But I can't now." Her voice shook. "I can't explain. I only know that never will I marry Rupert."

Something in her voice prevented John Temple from asking her reason. Her statement made him feel strangely glad.

"Are you going to visit him and tell him this?" he said, and was surprised at the look she gave him.

"I never wish to see him again!" she cried fiercely.

She got up and almost rushed from the room.

Temple sat thinking. He remembered the voices he had heard in the adjoining flat last night. He had believed it was Cynthia King talking, yet Marjory's voice was not in the least like Cynthia's. Something must have happened last night that had disillusioned the girl. Temple's hand clenched.

"The scamp!" he cried.

Feeling in his pocket for his cigarette case, he produced the broken pendant he had picked up the night before. He studied it.

It was obvious that it was the lower part of a pendant. He had bought Cynthia one lately, the lower part of which had consisted of diamonds and pearls linked on to the upper rather unsafely, he had thought. It occurred to him that Cynthia's was just like the one he held in his hand.

He turned it over and over. Yes, it was the same—three pear-shaped pearls hanging on a crescent-shaped diamond bar. He looked at it closely. He was a judge of pearls, and he had noticed a little fleck on the center one of Cynthia's pendant. He turned a little pale, for on the center pearl was the same fleck. On the back of the bar was a tiny "C" and a date engraved on the gold—the date on which he had given her the pendant. He turned cold, and in his heart bitter anger grew. His suspicions returned in full force.

He could not help knowing that people had linked the names of Cynthia King and Rupert Bronson. He had heard it whispered that Cynthia meant to make a marriage of convenience, although her heart was Rupert's. He had not believed. He had had perfect faith in Cynthia until last night, when he had believed he heard her voice in Bronson's flat.

How it all fitted in! Marjory behind the screen—her subsequent passionate renunciation of her lover. Had she heard what Temple had heard, and knew she had been deceived? Had Bronson lied when he had declared he had been with Marjory? Had Marjory been there unknown to him?

He looked up as Marjory entered the room. Opening his hand, he showed her the jewel.

"Is this yours?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"I have never had any jewels in my life," she answered.

"Ah!" He opened his pocketbook and put the ornament away. Then he looked up at her.

"Miss Lane."

"Yes, Mr. Temple."

"I want you to tell me something," he said slowly. "Did you go behind the screen last night because I came in? Or was it because Bronson had another visitor—Cynthia King?"

There was a moment of silence.

Marjory flushed and then went white. For a moment she could not answer.

Her thoughts had flown back to last night when Temple had entered Bronson's flat. She remembered the pain in his voice—pain that she, too, had known so acutely. He had suffered, even as she had suffered. Yet he had forced himself to think for her, to help her, to give her shelter. Gratitude filled her heart.

She believed that if she answered him truthfully it would wreck his happiness. He loved Cynthia King. Cynthia was not worthy of him, but Marjory was thinking of his faith, of his love, of his happiness.

"I hid behind the screen because of you," she said simply.

"Thank you," he said quietly, and asked no further questions. The mystery of the pendant had still to be cleared, but he could not question her further.

He rose and said he had to go, but begged her to remain where she was till his return. Downstairs he took a cab and gave Cynthia's address.

Cynthia was in and greeted him effusively.

"My dear John, what a surprise! I did not expect you till the afternoon," she said gushingly.

He looked at her steadily. She was not wearing her pendant, he noticed. He held out his open hand.

"I came to restore this," he said, and handed her the broken jewel.

She stared in amazement.

"Why, where did you find it?"

"In Bronson's flat after you had left," he said coldly.

For an instant she could not speak, but looked at him in guilty silence. Then she bit her lip.

"Are you mad? What are you saying?" she asked.

"The truth," he said sadly. "Cynthia, I would never have believed it. I was ready to fight any one who breathed

such a thing against you. You forgot that my rooms are next to Bronson's. I heard you there last night. Why did you promise to marry me if you care for him? Was it for money?"

"You insult me," she panted. "It is not true! It is an excuse. You want to quarrel with me."

"On the contrary, I shall always wish you every happiness," he said.

She stared at him blankly. She realized that he had come to break their engagement because of what he had discovered.

She saw all her plans crumbling in the dust, saw the rich husband she had plotted for escaping her. She turned to him appealingly.

"It was Bronson's fault. He made me go there. I love only you," she whispered.

He was silent. She clung to him.

"Let it make no difference," she pleaded.

"It has made the difference already. Nothing can ever be the same," he said. "Good-by, Cynthia. Keep your ring as a memento. I hope you will be happy."

"John, listen—"

He knew that she was false, knew that she wished to fool him with lies. Gently but firmly he disengaged her clinging hands and went away.

It was over—and once he had cared for her. Yet, as he walked homeward, he found himself thinking of Marjory, suffering for her because of what she must have endured behind the screen last night!

Marjory was waiting for John when he returned. She was dressed for the street.

"I must go away from here, Mr. Temple," she said as he came in.

He felt a pang of regret. She must go, of course, but she looked so frail and young. He felt afraid for her.

"Where will you go?" he said.

"I don't know," she said hopelessly. "I can't go back to my uncle and aunt,

that is certain. They wouldn't have me."

She told him the story of her uncle and aunt, of their harshness and meanness and of the way they made a drudge of her. She told him that they intended to send her to a reformatory as a servant. He looked sympathetic.

"Have you no one else?" he asked.

"No one. My father left me with uncle and aunt years ago when he went away to make a fortune. He never came back." She remembered what she had heard Rupert tell Cynthia last night. "I believe he did make some money, but my uncle has control of it until I am married. That would explain why he wished to keep me from meeting people," she added.

He nodded, thinking to himself that it also explained Rupert Bronson's interest in her. He looked thoughtful.

"I must make some inquiries about this. What was your father's name?"

"Rayner Lane."

He started violently.

"Rayner Lane! Why, he found diamonds and died a millionaire. Is it possible that you are his daughter?" he cried.

She nodded. When she had given him further details he said that he would make inquiries and hurried away.

He went to the courthouse and made a search for a copy of Rayner Lane's will. It was as he had thought. Rayner Lane had died an exceedingly rich man, and he had left all he possessed to his daughter—the money, however, to be in the care of her uncle, Thomas Read, until her marriage.

Temple returned to relate this to Marjory.

"I don't see what is to be done," he said. "Wills are queer things, Miss Lane, and it would be extremely difficult for you to touch your money while you are unmarried. Your uncle has the whip hand. He can let you starve if he likes until you marry."

"I shall never marry," said Marjory. He looked thoughtful.

"You'll have to stay here until I can consult my lawyers and see if it is possible to do anything. I haven't much hope."

Marjory flushed hotly. She knew that she ought not to be in Temple's flat.

"I can't stay here," she faltered.

"You can. I shall go out and drop a hint to the caretaker that you are my cousin, and she will look after you. Perhaps we can make your uncle shell out some of your money, and you will be provided for."

"But it isn't fair to you, turning you out—"

He rose and took her hand.

"Dear child, let me do this small thing for you. It will be a pleasure to me."

She yielded, and it was very sweet to yield. Already she marveled that she could have worshiped Rupert Bronson, who was clay beside the finer metal of this man.

She stayed, and Temple, having arranged with Mrs. Weekes, the caretaker, to look after her, went to a neighboring hotel.

The problem concerning Marjory was difficult. The lawyers told Temple that the law had no power to make Thomas Read do otherwise than provide a shelter for his niece until she married. Moreover, if Read chose, he could by the law force Marjory to return to his guardianship.

John knew something of the life Marjory had led, and he felt that he would do anything to prevent her returning to her uncle. He thought the matter over for some time, then at last broached the subject to the girl.

"One thing is certain, you cannot return to your relatives," he said firmly.

"Oh, no, no!" she cried. "But I can work—"

"You should not have to work when

you are so rich, Marjory," he said firmly. "There must be some way of getting around that will so that you can enjoy the fortune your father wished you to have. For instance, marriage—"

"I am never going to marry," she said quickly.

"Because Bronson behaved like a cad?" he asked. "I can guess something of the story. I know that Cynthia was in his flat that night, though you tried to shield her. The revelation of the scamp Bronson has destroyed your belief in men. Now, Marjory, you are too young to waste your whole life because one man is a cad, and it is certainly a shame that your fortune should enrich your miserly uncle because the man you love is not worthy of you. I have a suggestion to make. I happen to be fairly well off, so I am not guilty of wanting your fortune, I hope. But I want you to have it." He paused for a moment. "Marjory, will you marry me?"

"But you are engaged to Cynthia King!" she gasped.

"I have broken my engagement with Cynthia. She only wanted my money," he replied.

Marjory had tried to shield Cynthia for his sake, but she was glad he was not going to marry her.

"It wouldn't be fair," she murmured.

He gazed at her downbent head hungrily. They had become very good friends, but John Temple had to struggle hard to retain that pose of friendship. Marjory had somehow crept into his heart—the heart that had never really been Cynthia's. Cynthia had dazzled him with her beauty and her charm, but it had been left for Marjory to teach him real love.

"I want to do it," he said. "Of course I understand that you don't love me, and I shouldn't ask you for anything except friendship. You can trust me, Marjory."

He was looking away, so he did not see the look in her eyes that might have revealed her secret and told him that friendship in her case would be a mask for love. She gave a little sigh, which he thought was regret for Bronson.

He got up and stood before her.

"What do you say, Marjory?"

"I thought that you despised me because you found me in Rupert's rooms," she faltered. "You were so angry—"

"For your sake, I was angry," he said soberly. "I do not trust Bronson. But will you trust me?"

"Yes," she answered, and the marriage pact was made between them.

Within a week they were married, and Temple, having placed Marjory's affairs in the hands of his lawyers, went away. He had explained to Marjory that he was a wanderer and rarely stayed in one city for long. Marjory, while she smiled and assented, thought she knew why he went away on his wedding day. She imagined he still loved Cynthia.

The day after he had gone Cynthia King came to the flats.

Cynthia flattered herself that her power was supreme and that Temple would be glad to resume his old friendship with her.

As she entered the building she met Mrs. Weekes, and paused.

"Is Mr. Temple in his flat, do you know?" she said.

Mrs. Weekes opened her eyes.

"Why, no, miss. Didn't you know that Mr. Temple had gone away?"

"Gone away?"

"He has gone abroad."

"Mrs. Temple is there, though, if you would like to see her," added the woman, with a sly glance at Cynthia.

Cynthia fell back against the wall, her face ghastly.

"Mrs. Temple! Is she a relative?" she gasped.

"Mr. Temple's wife. He was married yesterday—to his cousin, Miss Lane," said Mrs. Weekes.

"Miss Lane! Who is she?" questioned Cynthia.

"Miss Marjory Lane. She's been stopping at the flat for a week or so. Mr. Temple's been staying at a hotel. I'll take you up if you'd like to see her."

"No, I'll go up," cried Cynthia, and she hurried up the stairs. Marjory Lane was the girl Rupert Bronson had intended to marry! Marjory Lane was now John Temple's wife! What did it mean?

Cynthia knocked first at Rupert's door, but he was out. She went next door, and Marjory opened the door. Cynthia entered.

"Is Mr. Temple in?" Cynthia asked.

"He has gone away," said Marjory. She invited the visitor to enter. They went into the sitting room.

"Are you Marjory Lane?" asked Cynthia. She was very pale, and she spoke with difficulty. John was rich, and she had lost him and his money. How she hated this girl who had taken him away from her.

"I am Marjory Temple. But I was Marjory Lane."

"Who was engaged to Rupert Bronson?" flashed the other swiftly.

Marjory bowed her head.

"Until I knew that he loved you and planned to marry me for my money, which he intended to spend on you. I was behind the screen that night. I had come to see Rupert because I had run away from home. I heard all," she said.

"Then you told John Temple," accused Cynthia.

"No. I tried to shield you," said Marjory, but Cynthia was not listening.

She was thinking rapidly. She remembered what Mrs. Weekes had said—that Marjory had been in Temple's flat for some days, passing as his cousin.

Cynthia knew how chivalrous he could be. It pointed to an explanation of his sudden marriage.

She rose to her feet, staring at Marjory with a look of scorn.

"I see. John married you out of pity. I wish him joy," she said bitterly. "And you, also," she added. "You will not find it easy to make John Temple forget me!"

"I shall try," retorted Marjory.

She could scarcely be polite to her caller.

"You!" cried Cynthia, and she laughed. "You! He will hate you when he comes back and realizes what he has done in his haste. He loved me for my beauty, but you are not even pretty. You are pale and washed out, insipid. No man could care for you—least of all John, who is clever and fascinating. You will bore him to death."

She turned and left the room, banging the door after her. Marjory heard her go, and it seemed as though the door had slammed on her heart.

Swiftly she ran into the adjoining bedroom and stared at her reflection in the glass long and earnestly.

It was true that she was pale. Her eyes were shadowed. But somewhere Marjory had heard or read that every girl has her good features and can be interesting, even fascinating, if she chooses.

"He is my husband. I am going to fight for his love," she cried, and set her lips in a determined line.

"She is wonderful!" muttered Rupert Bronson.

He stood in a crowded ballroom and brooded over all he had lost. It was six months later, and on the other side of the room, surrounded by eager admirers, stood Marjory, the acknowledged belle of the ball.

Marjory, whatever she had been when Cynthia King had scorned her, had developed into a remarkably beau-

tiful girl. People talked of her fascination and charm. When she entered a room, however crowded, she was speedily singled out as the chief attraction, and men flocked around her.

She had bobbed her hair, and the thick, short waves of radiantly fair hair suited her well. Her eyes shone like blue stars, and her fleeting smile was full of charm. She was rich, for she had inherited the whole of her father's great fortune.

On this night she wore a gown of thick white crêpe de Chine, with shoulder straps of pearls. Pearls were about her neck, also. She wore no other ornaments.



"I see," said Cynthia. "John married you out of pity. I wish him joy. And you, also. You will not find it easy to make John Temple forget me!"

She waved a white feather fan to and fro slowly, and looked over the edge of it at the people about her.

John Temple had not returned, but Marjory had thrown herself into the

world of society and had become a radiant star. She had done what she had set out to do and more, for she had achieved a startling, an amazing success.

Rupert Bronson stood at the other side of the room and watched. She did not want him. She snubbed him coolly and decisively, and passed him by. In his anger he told himself it was because she was piqued—she would not show that she still cared.



"I shall try," retorted Marjory. She could scarcely be polite to her caller.

John Temple's flat was still kept on, but shut up. Marjory had taken a house and lived there with a companion. She sometimes entertained society people, but neither Rupert nor Cynthia were ever invited.

"Rupert," said a voice beside him, and he turned to see Cynthia. She looked excited and very animated.

"What do you think has happened? John Temple has come home!"

"Impossible!" he cried.

"He is here," she said. "I have seen him. He has not seen his wife yet. If only we could do something to part them forever. I hate her! But for her I should be married to him. All my debts would be paid and my difficulties passed. I am desperate! I don't care what I do to gain my own ends!"

"I, also," he said. He might have loved Cynthia, but he loved money more. He, too, was enraged that he had lost the chance of marrying money.

"We must act," he said decisively. After a few minutes he left Cynthia and crossed the room to stand near Marjory. By some chance, the others melted away before him and he was alone with her. He looked at her appealingly.

"Marjory, you've always been so cold toward me. Do you know that it is a year ago that we first met—and I took you home on my motor cycle?" He spoke in a low tone.

"I had forgotten," she said coldly.

"I had not. For the sake of old times, for the sake of what might have been, won't you dance with me?" he pleaded.

She consented. He was dancing with her when Temple came into the room. Cynthia was waiting, and she went up to him.

"Dear old John, so you are back again!" she cried.

"I have come to look for my wife. They told me she was here," he said.

"She is dancing with Rupert Bron-

son. But, of course, she did not expect you," she said sweetly. "Dear John, for old times' sake, do dance with me. You'll have all your life to dance with Marjory."

He did not answer, but his eyes sought out Marjory and followed her. She had not seen him. He stood still, marveling at her beauty. He saw Bronson and his face hardened.

"Let us dance!" he said. Marjory's first glimpse of her husband showed him with Cynthia King in his arms.

She made no sign, but danced again with Rupert.

Presently John saw her alone, and went up to her.

"Marjory! What have you done to yourself while I have been away?" he cried.

"I don't know. I have danced a great deal," she said. "Have you come back to stay?"

"I don't know. It depends on you," he said in a low voice.

She said nothing, but sat looking straight before her at Cynthia King. Cynthia was looking at Temple as he talked to his wife, and it seemed to Marjory suddenly that it depended not on her, but upon Cynthia.

"Come and see me, and we will talk it over," she said with sudden flippancy. "I have taken a house for the season, but you will go to your flat, I suppose?"

"Yes. I shall go to the flat, unless you wish otherwise," he said gently. His face was pale, his eyes yearning. She turned her head away.

"My next dance is booked. My partner will be looking for me," she said hurriedly. He saw Bronson approaching. He bit his lip.

"You are friendly with Bronson, then?" he asked coldly.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Why not? I find him amusing, as no doubt you find Miss King," she retorted.

She danced away, and when he would

have driven her home he found his place taken by Rupert Bronson. All she gave him was a touch of her hand and a set society smile. He walked away moodily.

Marjory, when she returned to her well-furnished house, was thinking that Temple had come home only for the sake of Cynthia King.

A great load of misery descended on her heart as she thought of it. Marjory had learned to be gay and popular, had learned to smile and wear a mask. But she knew her secret heart, and she knew that it had ached for Temple's return.

She wanted him. She loved him. She had dreamed of him, imagined his return, played with the fancy that he might perchance fall in love with her.

To-night, when she had seen him, the room had whirled about her for an instant, so great had been her happiness. But he had been dancing with Cynthia!

He had loved Cynthia in the old days. Why should he change? She remembered how his voice had rung with pain that night in Bronson's flat.

The next day when he called she was out, and for several days, though he called regularly, she avoided seeing him. She wanted to see him, and her heart ached for a sight of him, but she feared to meet him lest she should betray her secret.

One night, when he had been home a week and Marjory was at a ball, a letter was brought to her. She opened the note with fingers that trembled.

MARJORY: I must see you. Will you not spare me one interview? I am at the flat. When you leave the dance will you come here for a few moments? You will find the door open and I shall be waiting for you.

JOHN TEMPLE.

She thrust the letter into her dress. The ball was not half over, but Marjory hurried away.

When she reached the flats she went swiftly up the stairs.

The door of Temple's flat was ajar. She pushed it open and saw there was a light in the sitting room. She hurried down the passage and entered.

As she did so a man rose from the settee.

It was Rupert Bronson!

At the very moment that Marjory walked into her husband's room and found she had been trapped by Rupert Bronson, Temple was entering the ballroom she had left.

John had decided to go to the ball because an irresistible desire to see Marjory had seized him. Knowing she was to be at the dance, he went there from his club. As he left his cab and ran up the steps he saw, lying on the red carpet, a twisted scrap of paper.

It looked like a letter and John picked it up. As he did so he started. Under the bright light he caught sight of his own name, not in his own writing, but in a very creditable imitation of it.

He opened the sheet and read the note that Marjory had received. She had dropped it as she went to the false appointment.

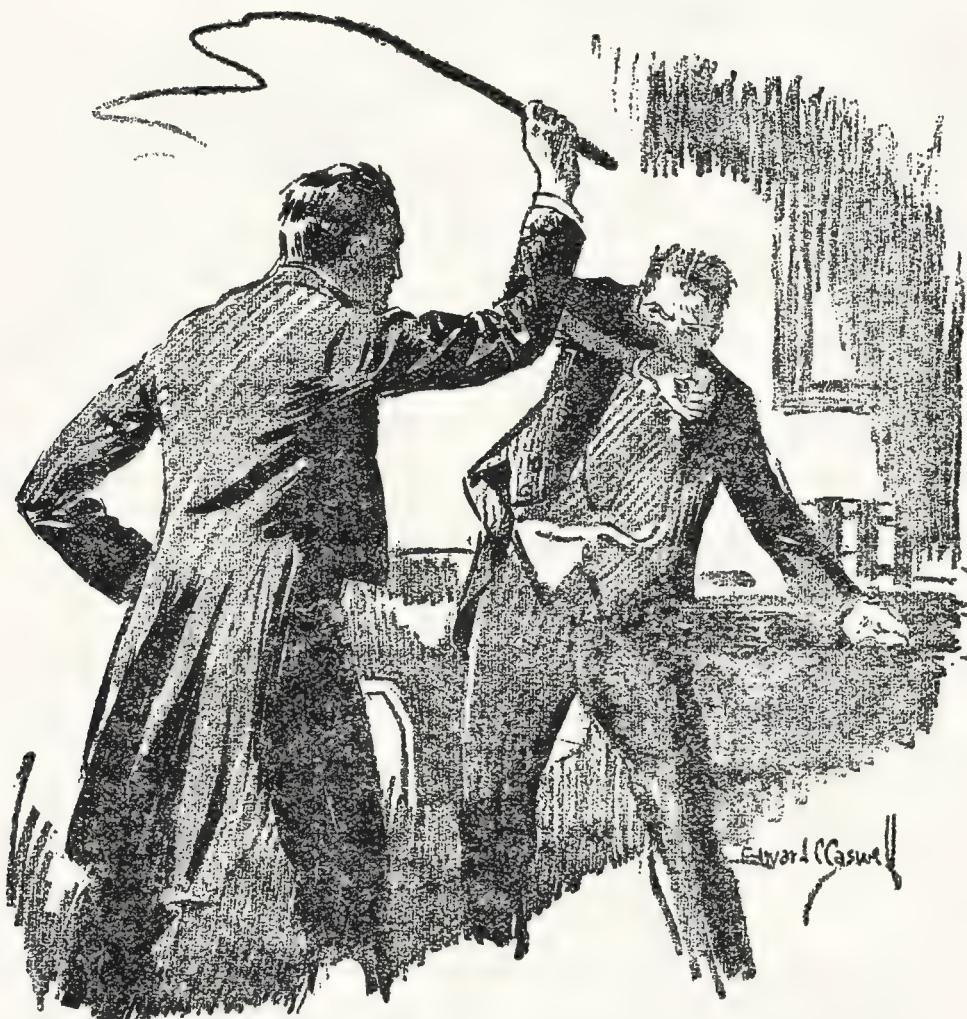
It flashed across John's mind instantly that she had been trapped.

The thought of Bronson came into his mind, and he stood aghast. One night Bronson, returning home late, had opened Temple's door by mistake with his own key, and they had discovered that the locks were similar.

He hailed a cab, jumped in and drove at once to his flat.

He entered noiselessly and crossed the hall. The sitting-room door stood ajar and he heard the voice of the girl he loved.

"I do not love you, Rupert Bronson," she was saying. "Once, long ago, I thought I did, but now—now I think I hate you! Why did you bring me here by a trick? Where is John?"



What followed was short and sharp and decisive. Bronson was quick to howl for mercy as he received the blows he so richly deserved.

"Do not be alarmed," said Bronson's mocking voice. "John will be home soon, I have no doubt. In fact, I mean to keep you here till he does come home. Let him find us together, Marjory. A long time ago he struck me and then took you away from me. I have never forgiven him."

"I love my husband," cried Marjory, "and if he believes what you would have him believe it will break my heart. Have you no mercy?"

"None," said the man with a laugh. Marjory stood in the center of the room. Bronson was barring her way to the door. He turned his head as Temple entered.

He smiled slightly.

"You've come just in time," he said, trying to carry off the situation. John's eyes blazed at him.

"In time to overhear your infamous plan," he said in icy tones. "Bronson, I knew you were a cad, but I did not

know you were as bad as this." He looked across at his wife.

"Marjory, your car is waiting. Go home, and leave me to deal with this scoundrel."

She gave a little gasp.

"Hear me! Let me explain——"

"No explanation is needed," he said tenderly. "I found his note where you had dropped it, and just now I heard what you said to Bronson. Go home, and leave me to deal with him."

"What are you going to do?" she whispered.

"Give him a little of what he deserves," he said grimly. "Go, Marjory!"

He took her to the door, promising to follow soon.

As he returned to Bronson he took a whip from a hook on the wall.

What followed was short and sharp and decisive. Bronson was quick to howl for mercy as he received the blows he had so richly earned. As his cries rent the air John flung the whip away. He jerked the man to his feet.

"Never dare to cross my wife's path again. If you do, I will make public the whole story of your behavior to-night," he said. Bronson made no answer as he skulked out of the door.

Marjory and John Temple never saw him again. He went to South Amer-

ica, and some months later sent for Cynthia King to join him.

Having punished Bronson, John hurried to Marjory's house. He found her awaiting him in the drawing-room, her face pale, her eyes anxious.

"I ought not to have left you. Has he hurt you?" she cried.

Temple laughed.

"Not he. Nor will he ever trouble you again, Marjory." He took her hands in his. "I could not help overhearing what you said to-night. Did you mean it? Is it possible that you care?"

She lifted her eyes to his. Her face was burning, but her lips smiled.

"Yes, John—so much! But I thought you loved Cynthia," she said.

He caught her in his arms.

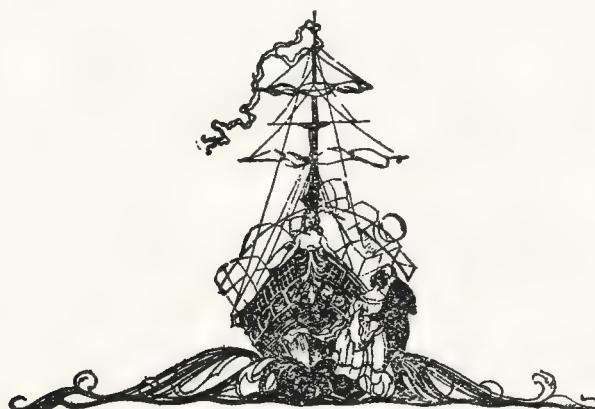
"I love you and only you!" he cried. "I went away because I cared too much to be able to keep our pact of friendship if I stayed. I meant to go away again, because I thought you did not care. But now, may I stay, Marjory?"

She clung to him, half laughing, half crying.

"I love you better than all the world," she cried. "Stay with me always. Or, if you go away again——"

"What, little wife?" he whispered.

"Take me with you!" cried Marjory.



# The Scarred Heart

BY

## Ruby M. Ayres

Author of "CANDLELIGHT,"  
"FOR LOVE," "THE WOMAN HATER"



### THE STORY SO FAR

While at school Mark Hellaby meets Miriam, a girl of fifteen—a year and a half older than he—whose mother is frowned upon by society.

He dislikes her, but she tells him that in later life they will meet again.

Mark leads a lonesome boyhood, in which most of the things and people he cares for go away or die.

Fifteen years after he meets Miriam. Mark suspects that his friend Bishop, whom he has known since boyhood, has brought about the meeting. About the same time Mark meets Mary Silver and loves her. When asked to marry him, she disappears. Afterward she tells him she is married. Mark thinks again of Miriam, who fascinates him. He is told at his apartment that a call has come to him from Bishop's residence.

### CHAPTER XXV.

MISS MIDIAN stared at Mark with inquisitive eyes when he walked into the house the following morning.

"Oh, so you have come back, then," she said tartly.

Mark looked at her without answering, and went on up the stairs to his father's room.

John Hellaby sat in a chair by the fire—a gaunt figure in his flowered dressing gown.

He was looking at the picture of his wife that stood on the dressing table, but he turned his eyes from it when Mark came in and smiled faintly at his son. After a moment, he held out his hand with a stiff, difficult movement.

Mark flushed as he touched the hand with his own awkwardly. He was relieved when, after a moment, Doctor Broughton arrived.

"Our patient is better, much better," he said cheerily to Mark. "We must get him away—the sooner the better. What do you say, nurse?"

The nurse came forward, and Mark moved away.

When the doctor left, Mark was waiting for him on the landing.

"Is there any need for me to accompany my father when he goes away?" he asked. "He will have my aunt, of course, and the nurse."

Doctor Broughton hesitated.  
"There is no actual need, of course,"

he said. "But—" He stopped, surprised at the look of relief in Mark's haggard eyes. "There is no actual need, of course," he said again.

Mark packed his belongings that afternoon and went back to New York.

He felt that he could not tolerate the country and the sunshine another day. There was too much time to think, and too many memories. In the city there were always distractions.

He went to say good-by to his father. For the first time John Hellaby seemed interested in what was said to him.

"Going away—why?" he asked sharply, and looked at Miss Midian, who was in the room.

Mark did not know how to answer. He made his escape as soon as possible. He wired Taylor that he was coming, and got back to his apartment in the early evening.

He had hoped to escape from his thoughts and to find distraction in New York, but it seemed a thousand times more difficult than at his father's house.

The knowledge of the added miles which he had put between himself and Mary Silver only increased his longing for her. He got rid of Taylor on some pretext and tramped the room in a fever of restlessness and mad longing. "Mary Silver—Mary Silver."

His arms ached for her. His mind was a numbed weariness that held no thought but of her. He suffered more acutely than in the days when he first lost her.

It was a torment to think that she had ever belonged to another man, even though it had been for so short a time and so long ago. It was terrible to know that she could not belong to him.

Yet she loved him! Mark knew that, but the knowledge only added to his suffering.

If she loved him, why was she not here with him now? If she loved him, what did a few traditional scruples matter, or a dread of what the world would

say? Yet Mark knew that it was no fear of the world that divided him from Mary Silver, but something within herself, some innate purity and belief in right and wrong that had erected the barrier which all his strength could not break down.

She must be unhappy, too, if she loved him, he knew. He blamed himself for not having seen her once more; tortured himself with the thought that, perhaps, had he done so, things might have been different—that he might have won her over at last. It was this hope that drove him to write to her, to pour out his heart in a last appeal that she would not forsake him. His longing found him an eloquence of which he had never before been capable.

My Most Dear! My Most Dear! I cannot believe it, Mary. I cannot give up all hope without one last appeal.

I honor and love you above everything else in the world. When I think of you it is as of some one so wonderful and far above me that I feel I should approach you on my knees.

Mary, is it too great a sacrifice that I have asked you to make? What harm can it do to the world, or any one in the world, if you come to me and give me the only happiness I shall ever know? I am not worthy of you, but I love you with every breath of my body. My arms ache for you. Every beat of my heart cries for you. There can be nothing for me in life if I may not have you.

Oh, most dear! My heart pleads as earnestly as did Arthur's for his sight—"Is there no remedy, Hubert?"—and the answer comes back to me even as I make this last appeal, my beloved, "None, but to lose your eyes."

I have so much to tell you, Mary. It seems impossible that I shall never have you to talk to, never to kiss again. Most dear, perhaps it is only all that is weak in me that cries to you; yet, my love for you is the greatest strength of my life—the only good thing I have to offer you.

Come to me, most dear! There are no other words in my heart, no other thoughts in my mind but that I love you. I want you.

Mark did not dare to read this letter through. He addressed it to Mary and went out and posted it himself.

He waited three days for a reply—three tortuous days which robbed him of his youth, and during which he could neither eat nor rest. At last, driven almost to despair, he went to see her.

But Mary was not at the hotel. The peroxide landlady told Mark that she had gone away only the night before, leaving no address.

"Only last night."

Mark echoed the words tonelessly. She must have had his letter. This was her way of answering it.

He turned away with death at his heart. He went back to town and to the club, where he dined with two men—friends of Bishop's, who, as a rule, he avoided. He was helped home by them in the small hours of the morning, riotously drunk and singing at the top of his voice.

He slept that night, a heavy sleep that brought forgetfulness for a little while. But he awoke in the early morning with a blinding headache and a cruelly vivid memory of the previous day.

"Oh, good Heaven!" Mark whispered, with dry lips.

This was the end of his dream—the very end—and he knew himself forsaken.

Taylor came into the room, walking on tiptoe lest his master should still be sleeping. Mark's eyes were wide open, and he asked with the irritation of torn nerves:

"Well—what's the matter?"

"Nothing, sir. I only wondered if you were awake."

"Well, I am! I'm going to get up, too. Turn the bath water on."

"Yes, sir."

Taylor left the room, to return almost immediately.

"There was a telephone call for you last night, sir. I couldn't rightly make it out. It seemed as if the party speaking wasn't used to the phone, but I caught Mr. Bishop's name and—"

"Bishop!" Mark laughed cynically.

"Well, I'm in, if he rings up again."

"Yes, sir."

So he had got to fall back on Bishop after all! It seemed to Mark, as he slowly dressed, that this fact alone spelled failure and humiliation. Bishop, who had sponged on him all his life and kept him from making other and better friends, was the only soul left to him for companionship.

He was ashamed because he hoped that Bishop would ring up again or call around—more ashamed still because after a restless morning he went out with the deliberate intention of looking the man up.

He called at the club, but nobody there had seen him. Finally Mark took a taxi and went off to the suburb in which Bishop lived.

It was certainly a depressing neighborhood. Bishop had said that he lived there because it was cheap. Mark leaned back in the taxicab and closed his eyes to shut out the view.

He was not seeking Bishop because of any personal desire for his company, but because he felt he should go mad if he were left longer to his own society. There was nobody else to whom he could turn.

He wondered what Mary Silver would think of Bishop? She would find him intolerable, he was sure. Not that her opinion mattered—he had to live his life without her, so was trying to banish her from his thoughts. Mark believed that the only way by which to do this was to go back to his old mode of living, to try and find satisfaction in the dregs of pleasure, and forget that he had ever tasted the pure, sparkling wine.

The face of Miriam came to him again and again, and always with that little smile of infinite meaning in her dark eyes. Mark had often told himself that he hated her, but now, as he rode on, he deliberately allowed his thoughts to dwell upon her.

She was handsome. At least it would be something in a world in which he had nothing, if some day he—

The cab stopped. The driver looked around.

"What number did you say, sir?"

Mark opened his eyes.

"Oh, this will do. I'll walk."

He walked along the street listlessly. Two girls jostled him deliberately and looked back at him with laughing eyes.

He hurried his steps and knocked at the door of the house where Bishop lived. It was a clean-looking house, but there was an air of hopeless poverty and third-ratedness about it that impressed Mark with a sense of distaste.

Was there really any need for Bishop to live in such a district?

He could not remember having been to the house more than twice before, and he wished he had not come now.

It was too late to retreat, for there were steps along the passage inside, and the door was opened by a thin woman, with neatly brushed gray hair.

Mark remembered that she had been here the last time he came, and he said good afternoon before he inquired casually for Bishop.

To his amazement the woman burst into tears.

"Oh, sir! I thought you wasn't coming, and him asking for you all day yesterday—and me with nobody to leave him with until last night. Then when my sister did come around and I managed to run out and telephone, you wasn't in, and—"

Mark interrupted with scant ceremony.

"What is it? What's the matter?"

The tears broke out again—genuine tears they were, for, like many another of her sex, this middle-aged spinster had seen something in Bishop to care for.

Her voice was broken with sobbing, as she answered.

"He's been ill all the week, sir, only at first he wouldn't give in, though I begged him to go to bed, knowing the dangers of a chill. At last he had to, but it was too late then. When I called the doctor it was pneumonia he'd got, sir—and him being always such a heavy drinker, there wasn't a chance from the first, so the doctor says. And Mr. Bishop—"

"You mean—he's dying?"

Mark's voice was hoarse with distress. As the woman nodded, unable to speak for sobbing, he asked again roughly:

"Why didn't you let me know? Why didn't you send for me?"

"He wouldn't let me, sir. He wouldn't hear of it. Not even for any of his own people he wouldn't let me send—not till yesterday, when he kept asking for you, over and over again, though it was as much as he could speak your name, sir. So as soon as my sister came—"

Mark interrupted:

"Can I go up to him?"

"Yes, sir, the doctor—" She stopped speaking as a man descended the narrow staircase behind her.

"This is the doctor, sir."

Mark stepped forward. He asked an agitated question.

"Is there nothing that can be done? I only heard this morning. If you think that a second opinion—I will gladly bear the expense." He broke off, adding with an effort: "Bishop is my friend."

The doctor shook his head.

"He had no chance from the first. His constitution was so undermined. A pity, a thousand pities, but I am afraid there is nothing you can do except remain with him till the end. He seems to have felt his loneliness very much."

Mark winced. He could understand that! He wondered if there was anything harder in the world to bear than loneliness.

"You think he will not last long?" he asked, with an effort.

"Perhaps till evening," was the answer. "I am sorry. I wish I could have done more."

Mark went up the stairs and to the back bedroom, where he knew he would find Bishop.

It was a fair-sized room, but too crowded with furniture. It seemed almost unbearably stuffy and breathless—perhaps because the painful gasping of the man on the bed made it seem as if there could be no air in the room.

Bishop's eyes were closed, and his face so wasted and changed that for a moment Mark hardly recognized him. Then the eyes opened and the mouth twisted in a painful attempt to smile.

Mark went forward quickly. He took his friend's hand.

"Why didn't you send for me? I had no idea. I came quite by chance. The message last night was not properly understood."

Bishop tried to speak, but the effort was obviously beyond him. He closed his eyes again, fighting for breath, agonizingly.

Mark felt the sweat break out on his forehead. Remorse was tearing him. He had thought hard things of Bishop, and now he was wondering if, perhaps, after all they had been undeserved.

He sat down beside him, still holding the clenched hand. He spoke slowly and clearly.

"I am going to stay with you. Don't try to speak, and don't worry about anything. We're going to have a second opinion and make a fight for it."

The last words were almost a prayer. It seemed terrible to Mark that he must watch this man, who for twenty years had been his closest friend, die.

Bishop's lips moved again, and, although no sound came from them, Mark could read the words they tried to frame.

"Too late! I'm done!"

He knew it was the truth; knew that with each tearing, agonized breath, a little more of the sands of time were running out.

Presently he spoke again.

"If there is anything I can do! Anything you want—anything that will make you easier—"

He thought at first Bishop did not hear, and he was about to repeat the words when the handsome, sunken eyes opened once more, with such a world of distress in them, and dumb pleading, that Mark could hardly bear it. He steadied his voice with an effort, to say again earnestly:

"Whatever it is—I'll do it! Try and tell me. I'll do my best to understand. Is it your people? Anything to do with your people?"

No answer. Only the falling of the heavy lids once more, and the painful breathing that seemed to grow more difficult.

Mark sat silently watching him. All his thoughts were of the past and of their shared boyhood.

He had forgotten everything he had disliked about his friend, and was remembering only the many good times they had had together. He knew that in the future there would be another unfilled gap, an added loneliness.

The landlady came softly into the room and stood beside Mark.

"He's going very fast," she whispered. "I saw my own brother die like this." The tears ran down her face and she turned away. "It would be nice if a clergyman could come," she said, with vague helplessness.

Mark made no answer. He knew how much Bishop hated clergymen and all things appertaining to religion. He could well remember how at the vicarage Bishop had loathed going to church, and had invariably made an excuse to stay away, were it at all possible. In his mind rose a vision of the Reverend

Algernon Jope in his white surplice, kneeling at his carved desk and reading the prayers.

"O Lord, deal not with us after our sins.

"Neither reward us after our iniquities."

The words echoed clearly through Mark's brain as he sat there with his eyes on his dying friend.

They had wasted their lives, both he and Bishop!

"Neither reward us after our iniquities."

The voice of the Reverend Algernon Jope seemed to be speaking those words aloud in the darkened room, and then:

"Let us pray."

Still holding Bishop's hand, Mark shut his eyes.

Some one ought to say a prayer! He wished with all his heart that he could do so.

"Oh Lord, deal not with us after our sins.

They were the only words he could think of, and he said them again and again, with a hopeless knowledge of their inadequacy, till he felt the hand in his jerked feebly. He looked up.

Bishop's eyes were upon him, but their brilliance seemed curiously faded, as if the light behind them was growing dim.

"Mark!" Bishop managed Mark's name almost audibly. A long silence followed before he tried to speak again. When at last the words came, they were hoarse and exhausted—a last frantic effort.

"Not her—fault—not—look after—help—forgive—"

Even as Mark bent nearer to him, white-faced and straining every nerve to catch that last message, it was silenced by death.

One last struggle. The handsome head on the pillow was jerked violently backward and the chin pointed upward as if in a last, frantic search for breath,

before the strained body seemed to relax and sink into itself.

Mark rose stiffly to his feet. His brain was numbed with the shock of this sudden death, and the only words that beat monotonously through it were those in which he had tried to pray.

"O Lord, deal not with us after our sins."

He looked at Bishop's dead face. There was no peace in its haggard lines, nothing of restfulness. Mark wondered if the day would ever come when he, too, would have to meet death like this, without a friend or a loved one to weep beside him.

He laid the fast-stiffening hand gently back on the bedclothes and went downstairs. He heard the landlady moving about in her small quarters and went in to her.

She was bending over a saucepan on the stove, and she raised her flushed face as Mark entered.

"I thought, perhaps, a drop of hot milk—" she began anxiously. She stopped, realizing why he had come.

"Mr. Bishop is dead," Mark said.

The woman looked as if she had been turned to stone. She offered no resistance when Mark took her arm and led her gently to a chair. She dropped into it heavily and sat staring before her, her work-roughened hands clutching each other helplessly.

The milk bubbled up in the saucepan and boiled over, and Mark moved it to one side mechanically.

He looked at the woman and wondered at her stony grief, till he remembered that all women had liked Bishop.

"I'm afraid I must go out for a little while. I will see to everything for you. Can I get you anything? Will you be all right alone?"

She roused herself with an effort. She apologized tremblingly for her weakness.

"It was such a shock, sir—even

though I knew it might happen any time. More than seven years he's lived in my house." The tears came fast, and Mark waited till the first paroxysm had passed. Then he took his hat and coat and went out.

It had grown almost dark, and the paper boys were crying their news shrilly.

Mark hurried by. It seemed impossible that while the rush and bustle of the world went on in the same way, Bishop, who had been such a man of the world, lay dead and alone in that dark back bedroom.

To Mark it made life seem such a little unimportant thing after all. It brought back with renewed strength his longing for Mary Silver. If it was hard to live without her, what would it be to have to die without her?

He went to the nearest post office and telephoned to Taylor. He heard the man's shocked exclamation, and for the first time he was conscious of a very real pang of grief.

It was the friendship of a lifetime that had just ended. Mark knew that nothing would ever be able to replace it.

He gave Taylor a few instructions, and told him to come out to Bishop's place.

"I shall have to stay for the present. Some one must see to things. There is only a woman in the house."

As he left the post office, he noticed a girl with a basket of violets.

Mark bought them all and took them back to the house with him. He remembered that he would have to let Bishop's family know of the death, and went out again to send a wire.

He doubted if the news would trouble them much. He knew that Bishop never went home for months at a time.

The hours dragged by. Mark went to sit with the landlady—whose name he discovered was Miss Haynes—because he could not tolerate his own company.

He was glad when Taylor arrived. It was something to be able to shift part of the responsibility, for Taylor was capability itself.

They both slept in the house that night, but Mark went back to his apartment in the morning to see if there were any letters. He could not quite give up hope that perhaps one day Mary would write to him, but there was nothing.

He went along to the club and told several men whom he found there of Bishop's death.

"Dead! Good Lord! I saw him only a week ago."

"He died yesterday evening," Mark said.

One of the men laughed.

"The best way out of all his responsibilities, eh? Thought you'd had a row with him, Hellaby, and didn't speak."

"No," said Mark. He felt he could not discuss Bishop with these men. He left them and went out again.

Bishop was to be buried the following day. His brother, a man very like him, only shorter and less good looking, had arrived and taken possession of the few belongings the dead man had left.

"Was there no will, no papers?" he asked Mark suspiciously.

Mark shook his head.

"Not as far as I know. I have not touched anything."

He disliked his friend's brother, and found it hard to be civil to him. On the way to the cemetery the following day they hardly exchanged a word as the automobile crawled along the dreary road.

Miss Haynes, in new mourning for which Mark had paid, sobbed ceaselessly, and Mark wondered if she really cared, or if she merely considered it the correct thing to show signs of violent grief.

He hardly knew what were his own feelings, save that his thoughts harked

back to the past again and again—to the vicarage and the boyhood he had spent there with Bishop.

In those days Bishop had had such big ideas and been so ambitious! What had come of it? Nothing that was worthy of account. For the first time it occurred to Mark that perhaps he himself had not been free from blame.

He had always allowed Bishop to sponge on him and had encouraged him to idle away his time. Mark looked ahead at the slowly moving hearse.

A wreath of yellow tulips and laurel leaves from Miss Haynes leaned against the end of the oak coffin dejectedly. The brass plate, inscribed with the dead man's name and age, was hidden under a dozen other wreaths and crosses sent by various acquaintances—mostly women of whom Mark had never heard. He had read the names on the attached cards curiously, half expecting to see Miriam's among them, but it had not been there. Again the vague fear rose in Mark's mind that his bitter words to the dead man had been undeserved.

The automobile stopped, and Miss Haynes' sobs increased. Mark put his hand beneath her arm to steady her as they walked up the cemetery path. He felt as if he were acting and moving in a dream. Even when the minister began to read the burial service, the only words that echoed in Mark's brain were:

"O Lord, deal not with us after our sins."

He kept his hand beneath Miss Haynes' arm—such a thin arm it felt—and wished the service were ended so that he might go.

Yet when it was all over and the minister had hurried away, Mark felt a strange unwillingness to turn his back on the grave.

It looked so lonely, so unwept! The dead man's brother spoke irritably:

"There is surely no need to wait, is there?"

Mark roused himself with an effort and turned to the waiting car at the gate.

Miss Haynes had shed her last tear for the moment, but her face was pathetic with its tear stains and trembling lips.

They went back to the house, and she made tea for them and produced a home-made cake.

"Mr. Bishop always liked my cakes," she said, and broke into fresh tears, running from the room to hide them.

James Bishop met Mark's eyes and frowned.

"That class of woman is always the same! A funeral is as enjoyable to them as a holiday."

He drained his cup and rose.

"Well, I must be going. I've got a train to catch. I've packed everything and told the expressman to call—not that there's anything worth the cost of moving." He looked at Mark and hesitated. "About the funeral expenses, and settling with the woman here—"

"I will see to that," Mark said.

The other man looked relieved. He muttered something about times being bad, and having three children to educate.

Mark did not answer. He shook hands with him and followed him to the door, thinking how much like his brother he looked as he hurried away into the darkness.

Mark went up to Bishop's sitting room.

Taylor came to the door.

"You will not be staying here tonight, sir?"

Mark looked around. His thoughts had been far away.

"No—oh, no. There's no need to stay."

He was thankful that he was free to get away at last. He went to find Miss Haynes.

"I should like to thank you for all you have done for my friend," he said



"Last night when I was tidying the rooms upstairs, I found these," Mrs. Haynes said.  
 "I thought I'd best give them to you, sir."

quietly. "I hope you will accept this as a little present from me."

He laid a check for one hundred dollars in her lap.

Miss Haynes wept again copiously. She said she did not know what she had done to deserve such kindness. As Mark was turning away, she called to him hesitatingly. She took a little packet of letters from a drawer in the table.

"Last night when I was tidying the rooms upstairs, I found these," she said. "They were pushed to the back of the drawer and overlooked, I daresay, when Mr. Bishop's brother packed up the things. I thought I'd best give them to you, sir."

She offered the little packet of letters to Mark. They were knotted together with a faded ribbon, and were obviously love letters. Mark glanced at them and shook his head.

"No—I don't want them. Burn them."

He had no desire to read them, or even to discover by whom they were written. Bishop had had so many women friends in his life. At one time Mark had listened to all his bragging accounts of them indifferently, supposing that all men went through the mill in very much the same way, although his own experiences had been in a much milder degree. Since he had met Mary Silver, his outlook seemed to have com-

pletely changed, and he shrank from the little packet of letters with vague distaste.

"Burn them," he said again. "They are of no interest to me."

### CHAPTER XXVI.

It was the following evening, when Mark came in from an aimless tramp around the streets, that Taylor told him Miriam was waiting for him.

"The lady who came the evening you went home, sir," he said, and felt a thrill of apprehension when he saw the color that rose in dull patches to Mark's thin face.

He stood irresolute for a moment, one arm still in the sleeve of his overcoat. Then he shrugged his shoulders and let the coat fall to the floor.

Miriam was standing by the table when he went into the room. There was something queer and strained in her attitude, and she looked white and ill.

Mark shut the door behind him, and went slowly forward. In an inexplicable sort of way he was glad to see her. He had been dreading the long, lonely evening before him.

Some men at the club had asked him to stay and play cards, but he was not in the mood. On the way home he had thought he would go and call on Mrs. Lisburne, but changed his mind.

Probably she no longer wished to number him among her friends—not that he cared—save that it was one more tie broken. Miriam spoke first.

"I called to see you two days ago. You were away."

"Yes." He hesitated, then asked, "You know Bishop is dead?"

She opened her mouth as if to answer, but no words came. She caught her breath with a curious, gasping sort of sound, her head sagging from side to side, her hands tearing at the loose blouse she wore.

"Miriam!" Mark spoke her name

sharply. He took a step forward and caught her by the arms. "What is it? You are ill."

"No, no!" Suddenly she broke into wild sobbing, her whole body shaking helplessly.

"Miriam—for God's sake!" said Mark.

He put her into a chair and stood beside her, his hand still on her shoulder. Her desolate sobbing seemed to awake some answering chord in his own heart, drawing them together with a curious kinship.

There was nothing of the old fascination about her. She was just an unhappy woman, sobbing her heart out.

It seemed a long while before she regained her self-control sufficiently to speak.

"I'm so—sorry—but I've been ill, and—unhappy."

Mark laughed mirthlessly.

"Unhappy! My dear girl! We're all unhappy."

She sat silent, tearing at the cheap lace handkerchief that was soaked with her tears. After a moment she looked up at him from beneath her long lashes.

"You—too?" she said breathlessly.

Mark began pacing up and down the room. He kept his eyes downcast. Yet he was painfully aware of her changing expression; painfully aware, too, that never before had she attracted him in quite the same way, when all the coquetry was washed from her eyes, all the devilment gone.

She said again after a moment:

"I heard—about Mr. Bishop. I did not know if it was—really true—till to-day."

"Yes. I was with him when he died," Mark answered moodily.

She looked away from him. A long, shuddering sigh broke from her, and she bit her lip till the blood came.

"I am—sorry," she said faintly. "I remember him—so well—years ago."

"Yes." Mark came back and stood looking down at her. "That's a long time past," he said cynically. "I suppose we all meant to do great things with our lives then! And now—look where we are!" Bishop dead, and you—and I—"

"You—and—I," she echoed tonelessly. "How can you class us together?"

Mark turned on his heel and resumed his restless pacing.

"There is no difference between us, except that I am rich, and you are poor," he said harshly. "Neither of us is wanted in the world. I haven't a friend, and you—'" He waited, but she did not speak. He could not see her face, for her head was downbent. Presently he asked sharply: "Why do you come here? I'm dull enough, Lord knows!" Then, with a sudden change of voice, he added: "Miriam, I went to see the vicarage when I was home, after I last saw you—after the wire came! I had not been there for twenty years."

"The vicarage!" She looked up, something of the devilment creeping again into her eyes. "Yes," she said again softly. "I have so often thought about it, and you—as you were when you stayed there—and the wood. Do you remember?"

Mark laughed.

"And you, in your red coat," he said recklessly.

His pacing had brought him again to where she sat, and quite suddenly she put up her hand and caught his, pushing up the sleeve of his coat so that the ugly scar was revealed. With a swift little movement which he could not have prevented even had he wished, she bent her head and pressed her lips to his bare wrist.

Mark stood very still, the hot blood rushing to his face in a crimson tide.

Love had passed him by, he said to himself, and life stretched before him

without hope or promise, but the girl beside him was very fair.

The face of Mary Silver rose before his eyes, but he swept it savagely away. Of what use to remind a man who is dying of thirst that somewhere the water runs clear and unsullied between grassy banks where forget-me-nots grow?

The bitterness of disillusion and sorrow was still heavy upon him, and the memory of his friend's lonely deathbed haunted him like a prophecy.

All his life Mark had longed for affection and somebody whom he could look upon as his own. It seemed to his distorted imagination that by the kiss she had just imprinted on his scarred wrist, Miriam had put the seal of her claim upon him.

He believed that she cared for him and had always cared. He was sorry for her life as he knew it to have been, and vaguely sympathetic, recognizing the similarity to it of his own case. As he had said, money and position alone marked the difference between them.

Mary had forsaken him. Bishop was dead. His father—not that he had ever counted greatly—could not live long! There remained, then, only Miriam.

Mark turned his head slowly and looked down at her. Her dark eyes were misty, and a little wavering, half-mocking smile trembled on her lips.

It seemed to Mark that this moment was the complete fulfillment of the prophecy she had made to him all those years ago when he had been a mere boy.

"I daresay we shall meet again some day."

There was a strange pulse throbbing in the nerves of his temples, and his face felt hot.

Miriam laughed. She leaned back a little, releasing his wrist as if she would have moved beyond his reach. Mark lurched forward and kissed her on the chin.

She put her arms around his neck when he would have raised himself again, and held him to her. Her lips caressed him.

"Do you love me? Do you love me?"

Mark laughed savagely.

"You know I do," he said thickly. He pulled her up into his arms. Her body felt soft and yielding.

It would be something snatched from the ruin of his life to make this woman his own, he thought. It would be something to stand between him, at the end of all things, and a lonely, unmourned death such as Bishop had died.

He took her kisses greedily, almost roughly. Forgetfulness was all that he

craved. He was like a child crying out against the threat of dreaded darkness, clutching eagerly at the first hand of companionship offered to him.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

"Taylor," said Mark, "I am going to be married."

"Sir!"

Taylor dropped the coat he had been brushing and swung around as if he had been shot.

Mark did not raise his eyes from the papers he was sorting as he repeated irritably:

"You heard what I said. I am going to be married."



Mark took her kisses greedily, almost roughly. Forgetfulness was all that he craved.

He waited, but as no further comment was forthcoming, he raised his eyes.

"Well?" he said sharply.

Taylor stooped mechanically to recover the coat, his face was red with distress.

"I'm sure—I hope you'll be happy, sir—very happy," he faltered.

"You're a liar, Taylor!" Mark answered coolly. "There's no such thing as happiness in this world, and you know it. However, we'll let it pass, seeing that I'm going to be married this afternoon at three o'clock."

"Sir!" Taylor no longer tried to conceal his agitation. He stared at Mark with wide-open mouth and something very like tears in his eyes.

"At three o'clock precisely," Mark repeated unemotionally. "I shall want you to come along and be a witness. After that—as I am going away for a few days—you can stay on here and look after the place till I decide what's the best thing to be done."

He straightened his back and looked around the room critically.

"No room for a lady here, eh, Taylor?"

"No, sir."

Taylor was almost crying. The sudden announcement had come as a great shock to him, though for the last four days he had realized that a subtle change had come over his master. He had not been at home until late at night, and was then nearly always the worse for drink."

Once he had brought Miriam home with him. Taylor hated Miriam, and could not understand Mark associating with her.

From his room across the passage one night he had heard Mark tipsily trying to persuade her to stay, and her own determined refusal.

"Flying for higher game," Taylor had told himself bitterly.

He had never believed that Mark

would pay the high price of marriage. Apart from his own undoubted affection for his master, Taylor felt such a liaison to be a great loss of prestige to himself.

Mark seemed to guess something of the man's thoughts, for his face flushed dully. He bundled the rest of the papers back into a drawer without looking through them.

"If you don't like the idea of it, you can go," he said abruptly.

"Yes, sir! thank you, sir," said Taylor, without the least intention of taking advantage of the offer. Mark was always a generous and, as a rule, a considerate person to work for.

He hung Mark's coat carefully away in the wardrobe and looked back at him from across the room.

"You'll be wanting your morning coat, sir, and silk hat?"

Mark's face flamed. He answered at random.

"No—yes! Oh, anything will do. I'll get the things myself."

"Yes, sir." Taylor went away quietly, shutting the door. Mark walked over to the window. April sunshine filled the streets, and the sparrows were twittering gayly to one another. Mark knew it was his wedding day, but why, or what chain of events had led up to it, he could not remember.

He knew that for four days he had been almost continuously under the influence of drink, and he knew that he had spent most of the time in Miriam's company.

She had been kind and amusing. She had certainly succeeded in drugging his memory, so that now he could think of Mary Silver with nothing more than hard bitterness.

He felt that she had done him a great injury. In his fuddled brain he blamed her for everything that had happened to him.

Not that he cared for her any longer. He believed cynically that he no longer

had the power to care for any one. In future, he was going to live his life in the way in which Miriam had shown him. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

He was going to live it with her—without thought for others, without thought for the future.

Her kisses would bring him forgetfulness, and that being so, the price of marriage which she had exacted would not be too great. He was alone in the world, and she was alone in the world. Fate had taken a hand and finished the game.

It never occurred to Mark to wonder what his father would say when he knew, or Miss Midian! Anyway, it would not have troubled him. They counted for less than nothing in his scheme of things. He would sooner have been influenced by what Taylor thought—had, indeed, already been influenced, only he did not choose to admit it. There was a vague discomfort in his mind as he stood and stared into the April sunshine.

He hoped Taylor would not leave him. He was always to be counted upon, the one sane, unchanging object in a world that seemed lately to have gone mad.

Mark walked into his bedroom and began to dress. He was still wearing his dressing gown, and he flung it off with weary irritation.

It was strange that this morning only little things troubled him and that his mind refused to dwell for a moment on the great issue which was at stake. He flew into a violent temper because he could not immediately find a favorite stud, but when, at half past two, Taylor came to tell him that there was a taxicab waiting at the door, he went out to meet the most tragic moment of his life with an indifference and calmness that filled Taylor with apprehension.

Taylor sat on the seat opposite Mark,

feeling far more depressed than he had done when he had followed in the wake of Bishop's funeral. A cold shiver went down his spine when Mark called out suddenly to the driver to stop at a florist's shop for flowers.

"What's the correct thing to wear at one's wedding, Taylor?" he asked flipantly. The valet did not answer, and Mark went into the shop alone and returned with a waxen tuberose in his buttonhole.

"How's that?" he asked, sniffing it appreciatively as the cab started away again, and Taylor did not dare to answer that it reminded him far more of a funeral than a wedding.

They reached the office of the justice of the peace just as another cab drove up from the opposite direction, and Miriam got out of it alone.

She was pale beneath her careful make-up. Her dark eyes grew defiant as she saw Taylor and she flung her head in the air.

Mark laughed. He felt himself to be an onlooker at a rather amusing ceremony.

He laid his fingers on Miriam's arm and they went into the building, followed by Taylor.

Upon entering the room Mark turned to Miriam. She had lost her glow and devilment. She looked pale and preoccupied, and Mark was conscious of a feeling of rising anger against her.

It was not for this that he had been prepared to pay the price. He had bargained with her as a nerve-racked maniac will bargain for morphine—at any price so long as it is his, to bring him forgetfulness and oblivion.

When he took her hand he was surprised to find how limp and cold it was. It felt as Bishop's had done in that last moment before Mark laid it down on the bedclothes and went out of the room.

"O Lord, deal not with us after our sins."

Mark roused himself with a start to find Miriam's eyes upon him. Her face was quivering, and she laughed hysterically.

"Well, it's all over. We're married," she said.

usual platitudinous words of congratulation, but he recovered somewhat upon receipt of double his fee. He looked after Mark and his wife interestingly as they left the office. He remembered them for the rest of his life and won-



Upon entering the room Mark turned to Miriam. She had lost her glow and devilment. She looked pale and preoccupied.

The man who had performed the ceremony looked from one to the other curiously. He had married many apparently ill-assorted couples in his time, but never any so strange as these two. He considered Mark's face a tragedy, and Miriam's eyes held something before which his own fell in fluttering confusion as he thought of his placid, uninteresting wife at home.

It cost him an effort to speak the

dered in what sort of a tragedy their marriage had ended.

Out in the street Mark dismissed Taylor.

"You'll hear from me in a day or so," he said. He avoided the man's distressed eyes.

Miriam looked on silently. She was handsomely dressed for the first time in her life, for Mark had already been generous. But to-day she had not given

a thought to her clothes or her altered circumstances. She was lost in the secret orchard of her heart, weeping at the foot of the tree of knowledge.

She turned obediently when Mark spoke to her and followed him into the waiting cab. As they drove away, he put his arm around her shoulders and drew her closer to him.

His face was flushed and swollen, as if he had been drinking, and his voice was thick when he spoke.

"Well, I've paid the price. You've got your own way," he said.

She turned her face from him. The scent of the tuberose in his coat turned her faint.

"I suppose you thought it was worth while," she answered sharply.

Mark laughed.

"I suppose I did," he admitted. His arm slipped away from her.

She seemed not to notice it. She sat stiffly erect, her hands clasped in her lap. She wore gloves that were too tight for her, and already the seam of the left hand had split across the thumb.

Her face was like a white mask as she looked out of the window. It seemed as if she had all at once lost the power to attract; as if the fire of witchery in her composition had flickered and died out.

Mark had taken an apartment in an uptown hotel. Later he had promised to take Miriam abroad.

They had tea in the hotel dining room. Miriam poured, and noticing her hands shook, Mark's vague pity for her awoke again.

He leaned a little toward her. He reminded himself that she was his wife, and that he had taken an oath to be good to her. He tried to put some sort of tenderness into his voice as he spoke.

"You are not afraid of me, Miriam? You have no need to be afraid of me."

"Afraid!" she laughed with a shade of contempt. "Why should I be

afraid?" And then, as if she realized that her words had been harsh, she added restlessly: "Can't we go to a theater to-night? Can't we go out? I don't want to stay here all the evening."

Mark was grateful for the suggestion. He telephoned for seats, and ordered dinner to be served earlier.

He had engaged a private sitting room, but Miriam declared she would rather dine downstairs, and again Mark readily agreed.

Miriam had changed her suit for a low-cut dress of bright emerald green, which, although it suited her dark beauty, was too loud in cut and conception.

She was quick to notice the expression of Mark's eyes as they rested upon her.

"You don't like it?" she said angrily.

Mark answered hurriedly that he was no judge of women's clothes, and added conciliatingly:

"But I like the color—and green was always Bishop's favorite color for a woman's dress."

Miriam dropped the menu card she had been carelessly studying, and bent to recover it. Her eyes were like fire in her white face when she looked up again, but she made no comment.

They lingered a long time over dinner, and Miriam grew talkative and excited.

"You may not like my frock," she said, "but there's a man over there who does. Mark! Shall you be jealous? He's never once taken his eyes off me."

As a matter of fact it was Mark at whom the man was looking, wondering even as the clerk at the registry office had wondered, what possible association he could have with the vulgar-looking woman in the green dress.

He was a good-looking man, fresh faced and well built, with the unmistakable something about him that denotes a gentleman.

Afterward, when Mark went into the smoking room while Miriam was upstairs getting her coat, the man followed and walked up to him.

"I suppose you don't remember me, Hellaby?" he said.

Mark turned around slowly.

"Sorry!" he said good-naturedly. "Afraid I don't."

The other man laughed.

"I must have altered more than you, then," he said cheerily. "I should have known you anywhere. My name's Trent. I went to school with you twenty years ago, and you once spent the Christmas holidays at my people's home."

"Trent!" Mark echoed the name almost stupidly, then a rush of burning color ran up to the roots of his hair. "Trent!" he said again. "Jim Trent! Good Lord!"

Trent held out his hand.

"Well, shake, won't you? Weren't we rather friends once upon a time?"

He took Mark's reluctant hand and gave it a bearlike grip.

"It's fine meeting you again," he said with unaffected pleasure. "I've often wondered what had happened to you."

"What had happened?" Mark echoed. His eyes turned to the open door, through which he could see Miriam in her brilliant green frock, slowly descending the stairs, and a wave of burning, intolerable shame swept him from head to foot.

This was what had happened to him—this marriage with a woman for whom he cared less—a thousand times less—than he cared for the memory of Jim Trent's dead mother. Suddenly before his eyes rose the memory of that shabby drawing-room in the Trent home and of her voice—singing. For an instant he stood like a man turned to stone, his heart tortured with sweet memories of Mary Silver which all the bought kisses in the world could never crush or kill.

Then he broke into a harsh, discordant laugh.

"Well, I must be going. You'll excuse me, won't you? Hope to meet you some other time."

He turned and walked out of the room to where Miriam waited for him in the lounge.

She looked at him with resentful eyes.

"You know that man? You never told me?"

She glanced back to where Jim Trent still stood, red with mortification.

"I didn't know him," Mark answered shortly. "He knew me. He says we were at school together. His name is Trent."

He followed her out to the waiting taxicab and they drove away through the mild April night.

The excitement had warmed Miriam's blood. She was remembering that Mark was a rich man, and that if she played her cards carefully there was no reason why things should not go well with her in the future.

She was almost stupefied by her own success so far. She had never dreamed that Mark would really marry her, which only showed how little she understood him. She put her victory down to her own skill and charm and would have been mortified had she known the place which she really occupied in his thoughts.

Although he had married her, in his mind he had never once relegated her to the dignity of wifehood. He had wanted her to help him forget, and had paid the price she had exacted—that was all.

She slipped a warm hand into his. He let it lie there without response. He felt as cold as a stone. The meeting with Jim Trent had cruelly awakened him to the irretrievable folly and shame of what he had done, and he hated the woman beside him as he had never believed it possible to hate any one.

He had known love once in his life, and he had desecrated that knowledge by this marriage. His thoughts went around like a hunted creature seeking some way of escape, and finding none.

Oh, to be free again! He felt the sweat break out on his face. He felt as if he were stifling.

He let the window down and leaned forward.

Miriam laughed.

"Headache?" she asked.

Mark wondered if it were his imagination that she had grown more common since that moment of their marriage, or if she had always been the same and he had not chosen to recognize it.

He sat through the play in torture, while Miriam leaned close to him and whispered, and pressed his arm.

The drive back to the hotel was worse, till at a sharp turning they came into collision with a taxicab coming from the opposite direction.

The mudguards jammed, and the window was broken.

Miriam was terrified. When Mark lifted her unhurt to the pavement, she let forth such a storm of abuse at the luckless driver that Mark burned from head to foot with shame. He wished he had been killed. He wished death had come to them both and ended the miserable story once and for all.

They walked the remainder of the way to the hotel, Miriam crying hysterically.

A disinterested onlooker might have felt pity for her, seeing that she was unnerved and distraught, but Mark's heart was hard as a stone.

His one desire was to be free of her. When they reached the hotel he let her go up to her room alone, and walked into the deserted smoking room.

The fire was out, and the room felt chilly.

Mark paced up and down, his hands clenched together behind his back. He

knew that since Bishop's death he had been mad, and that the chance meeting to-night with Trent had alone made him sane again.

He tried to think, but his brain felt on fire. He never knew how the time passed till one of the hotel servants came into the room to put out the lights, and paused in amazement when he saw Mark.

"Beg pardon, sir, I'm sure, but——"

Mark roused himself with an effort.

"All right. I'm just going. What's the time?"

"Nearly one o'clock, sir."

He stood aside for Mark to pass out, then switched off the light with a sharp little click.

Mark went on up the stairs and into his dressing room. He stood outside the closed door that led to Miriam's room, his face gray with shame and despair.

He knew that he hated her—hated her with a cold, implacable hatred that knew neither pity nor remorse.

He could hear her moving about on the other side of that closed door, and with sudden deliberation he turned the handle and went in.

Every light in the room was on.

Miriam stood by the dressing table, her long hair unbound and falling about her shoulders, her slim figure wrapped in a loose gown of bizarre pink.

She had never looked so beautiful or so womanly, but her beauty left Mark untouched.

Miriam felt that she was looking into the face of a stranger as she caught her breath in a little quick gasp, and the welcoming smile on her lips died away.

She knew instinctively that Mark was awake, that the drug of her influence had left him, and that he stood at last face to face with the thing that he had done.

For a moment the silence was profound and unbroken. Then she said sharply:

"Well, why don't you speak? After all, you married me of your own free will."

Mark came a step nearer to her. She shrank back a little from the steely gray of his eyes.

"You know why I married you," he said thickly. "I married you because you fooled me into it, because I was mad with misery and disappointment, and you found me easy prey; and because I was weak enough to imagine that in your way you cared for me."

She caught the words up with a shrill laugh.

"Cared for you! Do you think I'm the sort of woman to waste my time on a weakling like you if it hadn't been for your money?" She laughed again recklessly. "We may as well have the truth on both sides, as you seem so anxious for it all at once. I never cared for you, and I knew that you hated me and were afraid of me, because you knew—as I did—that some day we should be tied together like this in this hateful marriage—"

She tore her wedding ring from her hand and flung it at his feet.

"I thought I could stand life with you because you were rich. I thought I should like to be the wife of a gentleman, and have everything I wanted. I know now that I never could have borne it! I hate you as much as you hate me! I always have hated you because you despised me. You don't know what love is—you're ignorant of what it can mean! But I know—I know what it is to care for a man so much that I'd die for him—steal for him!" Her handsome face was marked with lines of haggard fury that seemed to rob it of all beauty.

"Oh," she went on, drawing fresh breath with a gasping sob, "you think I'm nothing—nobody—that I haven't got a heart, because I laugh and don't seem to care. But I tell you, Mark Hellaby, that when I knew he was dead

—the man you called your friend—the man who was my lover—I died—I died too!"

Her voice dropped to a hoarse whisper, and there was stillness for one hideous half minute.

Mark drew a long, choking breath. She went on raving as if she did not know what she said.

"I'd loved with him for months before that night you saw me, and it was he who arranged to bring you into the hotel and let you meet me there." She hid her face for a moment in shaking hands. "He'd begun to get tired of me then. I knew it, though I tried not to believe it—for he had cared at first. I was everything in the world to him at first. He'd have married me if he'd been free—but he wasn't—some woman got in before I came, and stole a march on me." She struck at her breast with unconscious tragedy.

"I loved him," she said. "I tell you that I died when I heard he was dead. They never let me know—nobody sent for me. It was my place to be with him—not yours. You only pretended to be his friend. I saw it in your face the first time I ever met you together. I knew that you never really liked him. You despised him as you despised me. But I loved him—whatever he was—whatever he was! If only I could have seen him once more!—just once more!"

Her voice failed suddenly. She flung herself face downward on a cushioned sofa at the foot of the bed, her hands knotted in her long dark hair. Her hard-won self-control was gone. Her long-suppressed grief broke loose in an uncontrollable flood.

Mark had not moved or spoken. His face was like granite. His lower jaw was slightly thrust out, and his gray eyes were extraordinarily pale and tigerish, their pupils contracted to a pin's point as they rested for a moment on the limp figure of the woman he had married. The blood surged fiercely to



Miriam's hard-won self-control was gone. Her long-suppressed grief broke loose in an uncontrollable flood.

his brain and he strode across to her, his hand stretched out as if to lay it on her shoulder, but he drew it sharply back with a shudder.

It seemed that he had always known this thing of which she had just told him. Little incidents of the past came crowding back to jeer and mock at him. Strongest of all were the choking words which Bishop had spoken in those last agonized moments of life.

It had been of Miriam he had thought! Mark knew that it had been for her he had tried to appeal.

And now she was his wife! The woman whom in his madness he had married!

Mark saw not only his own honor dragged in the mire, but the honor of the girl whom he had loved with his whole heart and soul.

Mary Silver! What would she think if she could know! What would she feel if she saw the added barrier of shame which he had with his own hands heaped between them. She had never seemed so utterly lost to him as now, when he stood looking down at Miriam and watching her hands writhing.

There was no room for even a shadow of pity in his heart—only outraged pride and bitterest hatred to think how easily he had been fooled. She had gone about for months with Bishop, and

Mark knew that it was his money that had kept them both—his money which they had spent together, while they probably laughed at him for a fool and a weakling.

He was blinded with mad fury. His hands ached to close around the throat of the woman who had tricked him into this marriage. That she had loved Bishop with all the strength of her nature and suffered cruelly at his hands counted as nothing with Mark. That it was the sheer anguish of her own broken heart that had forced the passionate truth from her at last, could not have drawn one throb of pity from him.

He hated her for the vague influence she had always had on his life, even during the years when they had not met. He hated her because she was tied to him in matrimony.

Suddenly his hands seized her violently and dragged her to her feet. He felt the soft flesh of her quiver beneath his brutal touch, and it gave him a fierce kind of joy.

She had called him a weakling. Well, he would show her what a man's strength could be. His savage passion rose as he saw the pallor of her face, down which the great tears rolled.

He could see the whole plot now clearly enough; how Bishop, beginning to tire of Miriam, had thrown her across his pathway, hoping that she would prove attractive, and therefore obtain larger sums of money than he himself had been able to do. It had been a put-up game from first to last, and would probably have ended in a quicker victory but for Mary Silver.

Mary had saved him for a little while, Mark knew well, but only to throw him back to surer destruction. Mark knew that Miriam had spoken the truth when she called him a weakling, and he cursed himself in a frenzy of shame for the inexplicable something in his nature that always seemed to fail him

when it came to the test. He broke out again in irrelevant anger.

"It's a lie that Bishop was ever married. If he told you that, it was only a lie to excuse himself from marrying you." He laughed, adding savagely: "In that, at least, he was cleverer than I have been."

The burning crimson flowed slowly to her face. The old fire rekindled in her eyes.

"That is so like a man," she said, with harsh bitterness. "You do a thing and then cry out that you were forced into it against your will. That is a lie. You wanted me, so I asked my price, and you chose to pay it." She laughed into his set face. "You married me to please yourself, and for no other reason. You wanted me—even if you hate me now, as I believe you do—you wanted me, and I asked you for marriage, never expecting to get it. Oh, you fool! You poor fool—ever to think I could have cared for you after him! I married you for money, and because it was a wonderful chance which I knew could never come my way again. Now I'm your wife, for what it's worth! I'll make you own me! I'll make you keep me! I'll make you pay as you've never had to pay in your life! I'll make—"

She broke off with a stifled scream as, beside himself with shame and misery, Mark lifted his hand and struck her across the face.

That sobered him, and he relaxed his cruel grip of her so violently that she staggered and fell backwards to the floor. Mark stumbled blindly from the room and left her lying there.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

Taylor was usually the most circumspect and respectable of all gentlemen's servants, but there were occasions—very few and far between, certainly, and always when Mark was supposed to be safely out of the way—when he al-

lowed himself to "go," as he would have expressed it. Being but human beneath his rôle of the discreet automaton, he considered his master's wedding day an all-sufficient excuse for an incipient outbreak.

He had therefore foregathered with a few kindred spirits and made a night of it, and in consequence he was anything but steady on his legs when, in the small hours of the morning, he staggered homeward, singing in a melancholy sort of monotone the refrain of a song which somebody had contributed to the evening's general entertainment.

If the missus wants to go for a row, let her go;  
If she thinks she'd like to row, let her row—  
let her row;  
Ten to one she'll get upset, and you watch  
her going down!  
But don't interrupt her, it may cause a row;  
Let her drown!—let her—

He had reached the door of Mark's apartment by this time and had stopped suddenly, the last word stifled in his throat. The door was wide open, and a blaze of light from the sitting room streamed out into the breaking dawn.

Taylor gave a gasp of fear. His first dazed thought was for the police. He had turned to run when Mark came to the door. Mark was in full evening dress and he still wore his overcoat, but his eyes were blank as for a moment they wandered over the man's dishevelled figure. He laughed mirthlessly.

"So the order's reversed, is it, and you're drunk to-night instead of me? Well, come in, man, come in. Don't stand gaping there."

Taylor crept shamefacedly forward. Mark slammed the door and went back into the sitting room.

A clock in the room had just struck three, and through the chinks of the blinds gray threads of light were already creeping.

Out in the kitchen Taylor was stand-

ing with his head under the tap. The shock of being found out had practically sobered him, and presently in a clean shirt and the black coat of respectability he came quietly into the sitting room.

"I hope that you'll forgive me, sir? I don't often let myself go like this, I assure you. But seeing that it was your wedding day—"

Mark cut him short.

"Oh, dry up. I'm not blaming you. Light the fire, will you? And make some black coffee—strong."

He sat down on the arm of one of the big chairs and stared at the ground. He had never been able to think more clearly in his life. His brain felt like a perfectly ordered machine which spared him no humiliating detail of all that had happened.

Miriam had loved Bishop, and now she was his wife! Mark moistened his lips. They felt cracked and dry as if with fever.

His wife! He had given her the place in his life which should have been Mary Silver's—he had sinned against love.

He got up and began pacing the room. He wondered if he would ever be able to forget the slow tears that had streamed down Miriam's white face, or the sight of her huddled figure on the bedroom floor.

A slow horror of himself awoke in his mind, and he knew that he alone was to blame for all that had happened. His disappointment had led him. He had played the weakling instead of the man. Worst of all, he had struck the woman whom, until a few hours ago, he had been satisfied to make his wife.

Taylor came into the room and went down on his knees to light the fire. He kept looking at Mark in scared, sidelong fashion.

Presently he ventured a remark.

"Hadn't you better take off your overcoat, sir?"

Mark seemed not to hear. His restless pacing up and down did not cease. His mind was working backward and forward in desperation, seeking some way of escape.

Miriam was his wife! Some day perhaps Mary Silver would know what he had done.

He stifled the groan that rose from his very heart. That was the worst of all, that perhaps some day Mary Silver would have to know! He had never thought of it before. It seemed now the surest proof of his madness, that he could have forgotten her even for one moment.

Taylor brought a steaming coffee, and ventured again:

"Hadn't you better take off your overcoat, sir?"

Mark flung the coat to the floor, then dragged a chair up to the fire and threw himself into it.

Mary Silver would have to know—know that he had married Miriam. Mark shuddered and clenched his teeth.

Twenty years ago his boy's instinct had warned him against the girl Miriam, and yet to-day, as a grown man, he had walked blindly into the trap she had laid for him.

He did not for one moment believe her story about Bishop having been a married man. He knew Bishop well enough to know that it had probably been just an excuse, a story invented on the spur of the moment. Bishop was not a man to tie himself to any woman. He had been too selfish—

Mark reminded himself that the man was dead and tried hard to forget the poor return he had made for the many years of friendship, but it was difficult. His heart was hot with bitter indignation and a longing to be avenged. He thought of the little packet of letters which Miss Haynes had offered him and wished that he had accepted them. Yet of what interest could they have been to him? So many women wrote to

Bishop, and he had cared for none of them with any lasting affection.

The gray light outside was growing stronger, and the clock on the shelf struck six.

Mark went into his bedroom and changed his clothes. He knew that he would have to see Miriam that morning and make some arrangement with her for their future.

He thanked Heaven that he was a rich man and could buy his freedom—if he could call it freedom, as long as he knew that somewhere in the world she still bore his name and called herself his wife.

He dreaded the thought of seeing her again, but he was back at the hotel by ten o'clock, waiting for Miriam in their private sitting room.

He had sent a note asking if she would see him, and the answer had come back verbally that Mrs. Hellaby would see him in a quarter of an hour.

Mark went white. "Mrs. Hellaby!" The name brought his madness home to him more completely than anything else could have done.

It was half an hour before Miriam came into the room. She wore the same trailing pink robe in which he had left her the night before, but this morning there was no trace of grief or despair on her handsome face.

She shut the door behind her and leaned against it, looking across at Mark with cool insolence.

"Well?" she said at last, as he did not speak.

Mark found his voice with an effort.

"First of all, I should like—I want to ask your pardon for the way I behaved last night. I lost my temper.—I—"

She laughed derisively.

"You call that losing your temper? Well, go on! You did not come here to say that, so what have you come for?"

Her words were blunt, and Mark answered her as bluntly.

"To ask what—settlement you will agree to."

She stared at him.

"You mean to keep away from you?"

"Yes."

"You mean that you don't intend to live with me?"

Mark's face whitened and he made no answer.

Miriam laughed, without much mirth.

"You've soon made up your mind. I suppose I behaved like a fool last night, telling you. But I seemed to go mad when you came into the room and looked at me like you did, as if you'd suddenly discovered I was not good enough!"

There was a profound silence, which Mark broke harshly.

"I'll give you two thousand dollars a year, if you will keep away from me and not use my name."

A gleam of eagerness filled her eyes, but she shrugged her shoulders and laughed.

"I've learned never to trust any man's word," she said bluntly. "It'll all have to be fixed properly."

"I will see my lawyer and get it properly arranged."

Her handsome face grew sullen.

"You are mighty anxious to be rid of me," she said. Then under her breath she added: "It was different a night or two ago."

Mark caught his breath sharply and the dull blood rose to his face.

Miriam watched him with an odd sort of jealousy. She had no spark of love for him—she had always disliked him for what she chose to call his "superiority"—but she was unwilling to let him go so easily.

"I'm your wife right enough, when all's said and done," she broke out.

Mark clenched his hands.

"I'm not denying that," he said

hoarsely. "I'm willing to do what is just and right."

Miriam's red lips curled.

"There's no need to get up in the pulpit," she said scornfully. Suddenly she put out her hand and caught his, turning his wrist so that the ugly scar was visible. "I reckon I left my mark on you twenty years ago," she said. "You can kick me out of your life, but you'll find it a job to forget me as long as you've got that!" She laughed triumphantly.

Mark drew his hand away from her.

"If you want me to kill you—" he began thickly.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I don't particularly care. My life's never been such a paradise that I mind getting out of it."

Her voice quivered. She walked away to the window overlooking the street.

Mark controlled himself with an effort, but his voice was shaken when presently he spoke again.

"Perhaps for the present you would like to stay here till I can make definite arrangements. I want you to be as comfortable as possible. You will be free to live where you choose, of course, provided—"

"Oh, shut up!" she broke out violently. "I'm sick of being preached at. You men are all the same—all right to a woman like me as long as it suits you to be, and then you start preaching. The gilt's off the gingerbread, and we're not ladies enough to suit your fine tastes. Even—he was the same at the end!" Her voice broke hoarsely and her eyes grew tragic. "He started trying to teach me manners—me!" She laughed wildly. "He told me I ought to try and be a lady like his wife was." She ground her teeth in bitterest jealousy. "His wife! He always threw her up at me when we quarreled. He knew I hated her."

Mark frowned impatiently.

"Bishop was never married," he said curtly. "He may have told you he was, but I knew him better than you did, and—"

She broke into shrill laughter.

"Better than I did! You never knew anything about him except what he chose to tell you. Not married! That's all you know! He was always more clever than you. He hoodwinked you from first to last. I say he was married! Don't I know? Don't I hate the sound of her name?" She drew in her breath with a hissing sound of passion. "Like a name out of a story-book—'Mary Silver!' If ever I meet her—"

She broke off hoarsely as Mark gave a strangled cry. His face was livid. He caught her by the arm with merciless fingers.

"Say that name again! Say that name again!"

She cried out as his grip bruised her flesh. She tried desperately to free herself. Mark's eyes were blazing with madness.

"That name! Say that name again!" he panted.

She shrank from him in terror. She thought he was going to kill her. She sobbed with fear as she answered him.

"What have I done? Don't hurt me! I never saw her, but it's true that she was his wife. I swear it is! Mary Silver, her name was. He said she left him years ago." She gave a passionate sob of mingled rage and pain as Mark released her violently. His face was distorted with passion.

"It's a lie—a lie!" he shouted. "She would never have looked at him. Mary Silver! Oh, good Heaven!"

He hid his face in his hands.

Miriam stood staring at him, panting and ghastly. She thought he had gone mad. After a moment she edged slowly to the door. With a hand behind her she opened it an inch at a time. She waited a moment, but Mark

did not move. She turned and fled precipitately.

Mark went downstairs and into the street. His face was swollen and crimson. His eyes glazed with madness.

"It's a lie—a lie!"

His own words rang ceaselessly through his brain.

Bishop—and Mary Silver! He almost sobbed aloud as he realized the cruelty of all it would mean to him if what Miriam had said were true!

"A lie—a lie!"

But how to find out the truth—how to refute such a calumny? Mary had gone, and he did not know where to find her. Bishop was dead.

Bishop and Mary Silver! Mark thought of the dead man's coarse, handsome face and the light way in which he invariably treated and spoke of all women. He thought of Mary Silver, her daintiness, her soft eyes, and her sweet voice.

It was horrible to speak of Bishop and Mary in the same breath—to think of them together. Suddenly the memory of the little packet of letters, which Miss Haynes had found in Bishop's room, came to him. Would they help? Would they show any way of escape from this dread that was killing him?

Mark stopped the first taxicab he met and gave the address of the house in which Bishop had lived. He had no real hope that Miss Haynes had kept the letters, for he had told her to burn them. Even if she had not done so, why should he imagine that they would be connected with Mary Silver?

The distance seemed endless. A fever of impatience burned in his veins. He leaned forward and stared out of the window with eyes that saw only the picture of the woman he loved in the arms of the man whom he knew he hated.

Mark bit his lip till the blood came. When, in answer to his ring, Miss

Haynes opened the door, she almost cried out at the sight of his ravaged face.

He could speak only with difficulty as he followed her into the sitting room.

"Those letters you found—I am sorry to bother you—have you still got them?"

The color rose in the woman's thin face. Tears filled her eyes. She answered nervously, apologetically.

"I know you told me to burn them. I meant to burn them, Mr. Hellaby—indeed I did. But I read just one—there seemed no harm—and it was such a beautiful letter, it seemed a shame, and so—"

Mark Hellaby stretched out his hand.

"Give them to me," he said hoarsely. As he hesitated, he added impatiently: "It's all right; I'm not going to blame you. Only give them to me."

She left the room reluctantly and brought back the little packet.

Mark snatched it from her hands. He turned his back on her and tore off the faded ribbon that bound the letters together.

"A lie—a lie!"

He tried to believe in his own passionate denial, but was choking with the dread of what knowledge the next few minutes might bring. He had only once seen Mary Silver's writing. It was in the scribbled note she had left for Mrs. Lisburne before she went away. He would not have known it again. Every nerve in his body was strained to snapping point as his eyes fell on the beginning of the first letter.

DEAREST: You asked me to write to you—

He turned over the page with a shaking hand. He turned over two pages and looked at the end. The last sentence burned itself into his brain with letters of fire:

How foolish to be jealous! You know I love you!  
MARY SILVER.

It was like a blow from a giant's fist. For an instant Mark reeled beneath it, then recovered himself with a mighty effort.

He took up each letter in turn—there were only a dozen of them—and read the first few words and the last of each.

Some were signed "Mary Silver," some just "Mary," and the last of all, which was dated more than eight years before, "Your loving wife."

Mark stood a long time with that one in his hand. Then with a slow, stiff movement he laid it down beside the others on the table. He turned to Miss Haynes, who was watching him with timid eyes.

"Will you—please burn these," he said quietly, "—now—while I am here?"

"There is a fire in the kitchen," she said diffidently.

Mark took up the letters and followed her. She opened the top of the grate, and he put them in one at a time. He watched them burn away till only gray ash remained. Then, without another word, he walked out of the house.

He could think of nothing save the crushing fact that when Bishop died, Mary Silver was made free, while he—blind, insensate fool that he was—had deliberately forged fresh fetters for himself.

But for his own lack of self-control Mary Silver might now have been his wife. His brain reeled before the horror of the prison bars which he had built with his own hands. He cursed Bishop with every breath in his body.

He was mad with the shock of the overwhelming blow; mad with the realization that now, at least, his own folly was to blame.

He walked about for the rest of the day like a lost soul. He never knew where he went or how the time passed. His body seemed dead to all feeling, though his brain was cruelly alive.

Mary Silver was free to come to him, but he was no longer free to receive her.

What would she say when she knew? What would she think? That his love for her had never existed—that he was no better than that other man whom she had married and by whom she had been forsaken!

The want of food and rest and the force of his own emotions made him almost light-headed. He began to forget that Bishop was dead and beyond his reach.

When late that evening his steps carried him to the club which he and Bishop had frequented, it was with the belief that he would find Bishop there.

He looked into all the rooms for him. Over and over in his mind he kept rehearsing what he would say, what he would do when they met. Finally, he went to the head waiter and asked if Mr. Bishop had called that day.

The man stared.

"Mr. Bishop, sir!" He thought Mark had gone mad, and backed away in alarm.

Mark pulled himself together with an effort and laughed stupidly.

"Oh, all right! I was only joking," he said. He ordered a hot coffee, drank it and dozed off into a restless sleep before the smoking-room fire. Once again a queer medley of dreams came to him—of the vicarage—of Alice Trent—of the dog Sinner, and of the first time he had held Mary Silver in his arms.

In his dream he bent to kiss her, bent to press his feverish lips to her cool mouth, and suddenly she changed. It was Miriam whom he held to his heart—Miriam, with eyes that scornfully mocked him. Mark started up with a smothered cry, to find a man with whom Bishop had once been very friendly watching him with amused eyes.

"Hello!" he said, as Mark laughed self-consciously. "Got back from your honeymoon already?"

There was a profound silence, then Mark asked huskily:

"What—what do you mean?"

The other man shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear chap, nothing. I admire you for carrying your friendship to such quixotic lengths, that's all."

Mark drew a hard breath, then a frenzy of madness seized him.

So even this man had known the truth about Miriam, while he had all along been kept in ignorance.

He made a lunge at the insolently smiling face before him, but the other man was quick and parried the blow. Mark closed with him, hardly conscious of what he did. There was a momentary struggle, then Mark slipped and the two men went crashing down together.

People came running at the sound, and Mark was dragged away. His collar and tie were torn. There was blood on his face, and he was swearing and shouting like a madman. It took three men to get him out of the club and back to his apartment, where Taylor received him with a terrified face.

"Oh, sir! Oh, sir!"

He tried to prevent his master from crossing the hall, but Mark swept him aside.

"You get out of this!" he raved.

He went on into the sitting room, then stopped dead with a choking cry. He saw Mary Silver sitting in his big armchair by the fire, her eyes turned toward him in startled inquiry.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

For a moment nobody moved or spoke. Then Mark stumbled forward and fell on his knees beside Mary Silver, his face buried in her lap. Her arms closed protectingly about him, while above his bowed head her eyes looked defiantly at the men who had brought him home.

As Taylor stepped forward and shut

the door, she bent over Mark, stroking his hair, kissing it, murmuring softly to him. Her face was beautiful in its tenderness and her brown eyes were wet with tears.

"My dear, my dear! I've come back, Mark—to stay with you, dear—to stay, if you still want me."

Mark looked up wildly.

"If I still want you?"

With tragic suddenness he broke down. He was shaken from head to foot by a man's terrible, difficult sobbing. His arms clutched her to him as if they could never let her go. Wild, incoherent words fell from his lips.

"Forgive me, Mary. I was mad! If I had only known. My own fault this time—my own cursed folly."

Suddenly he was on his feet again, his face purple with passion, his fists clenched. He was striding up and down the room, shouting in his madness that he would kill Bishop—that he would kill him—

Mary Silver ran to him. She tried to hold him with her slender arms. Her eyes were wide with nameless fear.

"Mark! Mark! What are you saying? Oh, you frighten me! You frighten me! Can't you understand, dear? I am free now—free to be your wife! Oh, Mark—"

He stood still, the crimson blood ebbing slowly from his face as he looked down at her with bloodshot eyes.

"You are free—yes," he echoed hoarsely, "but now I—am not!"

She cried out incredulously, clinging to him. Mark put her almost roughly away. He strode over to the mantel-shelf, leaning his elbows upon it. With his eyes hidden by his clenched hands, he told her the whole story from beginning to end—keeping nothing back, defending nothing, making no attempt to shield himself.

He told her of his lonely boyhood and of his friendship with Bishop. He told her of the girl Miriam, and of his

meeting with her again in New York all those years afterward—of the strange, half-repellent attraction she had always possessed for him.

"I hated her—as a boy I always hated her," he said between clenched teeth. "Yet, when you sent me away, I went back to her. I suppose I was desperate. All my life it seemed I had always lost everything I wanted—even a dog I once had—'Sinner—'" He broke off with a discordant laugh. "It's my fault, I suppose. I don't deserve anything. Yet, when I met you"—he turned on her with sudden rage—"you could have made anything of me, but you sent me away. You didn't care enough not to mind what a canting, humbugging world said of us. You put your pride before me. You—"

Mary Silver gave a little choking cry.

"Oh, Mark! For pity's sake—"

He stopped abruptly. After a moment he said more quietly:

"I'm sorry. I beg your pardon. I don't—quite know what I'm saying."

Presently he went on, carried by the same tide of passion:

"So I married her. She came here one night—to these rooms. It was after Bishop's death. I didn't care what became of me—you hadn't answered my letter, and when I went down to the place you'd been staying, you'd gone. She seemed to care—or at least I was fool enough to think so. She wanted me to marry her. It was her price for a few kisses—a—Lord—when I think of it!"

He clasped his hands behind his head, and the knuckles stood out white and hard beneath the strain of his muscles.

He went on after a moment.

"Of course, I can see now that the whole thing was planned. Bishop was dead and she was at her wits' end. I suppose she thought me easy game. I was, as it proved, but you drove me to it—you!"

His voice was strangled with passion. Mary Silver closed her eyes in anguish.

"So I married her—and I might have gone on for a little in my madness, pretending I didn't care, pretending it was all right. Only, as luck would have it, Jim Trent turned up. It was his mother I told you about—Alice Trent, and he—well, I grew sane then. I knew what I'd done, and how I loathed her—loathed her!" Mark shuddered. "I think she understood, because she turned on me before I'd said one word, and then—I got the truth! She'd been in love with—with another man for months, but as he was dead—"

Mary Silver gave a little cry.

"Mark! Who was he?—not—not—"

Mark laughed harshly.

"Bishop—yes! The man you married. The man you wrote your love letters to." He turned around, showing his white, distorted face. "That hurts, does it?" he said thickly, as Mary Silver moaned.

"Well, I've suffered since I've known you, so it's only fair you should bear your share. I found your letters—I read them. 'Your loving wife'—that's how you signed yourself to that man. You could trust him, but you couldn't trust me. You wouldn't believe in my love for you, but you gave yourself to him."

"Mark, Mark, you are cruel to me! Don't be cruel! I was so young! It's all so long ago!"

Mark turned away with a little shudder. A profound silence fell on the room.

Mary Silver stood with bowed head, the tears trickling down her cheeks, her lips quivering like a child's.

Mark's face twitched with pain as he looked at her. Suddenly he said harshly:

"Well, this is the end. You sent me away once. Now it's my turn."

He stooped and picked up her coat from the big armchair.

"It's getting late. I'll take you home."

Mary Silver did not seem to hear, though her falling tears were suddenly checked by the wave of crimson that dyed her face. Her eyes seemed to burn as she slowly lifted them.

She went across to where Mark stood. She put her arms around his neck, clasping her hands behind his head. She laid her face against his breast.

"I am not going," she said, and her voice was very clear and unwavering. "I am not going. If this is all my fault, as you say it is, I will make it up to you. I will stay with you, Mark, for the rest of my life—if you want me—because I know that I love you better than my life." She looked up into his set face and smiled through her tears. "I love you," she said again.

Mark stood like a statue, his eyes gazing into the silent room. Slowly he raised his hands and unclasped hers.

She spoke his name with a sharp cry of protest as he put her gently into a chair.

He kept her hands in his. He tried to speak, but Mary Silver started up, interrupting heartbrokenly.

"No, no, I know what you are going to say, and I can't bear it. Don't punish me any more. I've suffered more than you know—more than I can ever tell you. Don't send me away, Mark. Let me stay with you. I've learned my lesson, and nothing matters any more if only you love me. Don't send me away, dear. Let me stay—because I cannot—cannot live without you."

She clung to him, sobbing and trembling, but Mark kept silent. Presently her sobbing died down and she drew away from him.

Mark spoke in a voice that seemed to have lost all its life and expression.

"I put the blame on to you just now—like the coward I am—when the blame is mine. I've only my own weakness to thank for what's happened; nothing else. I'm not worth loving, Mary—not worth crying for. I'm not fit to take you, though God knows——"

He looked down at her bowed head, and the bitter temptation wrung his soul. He had but to stretch out his arms—but he knew so well what it would mean.

After the first little while she would

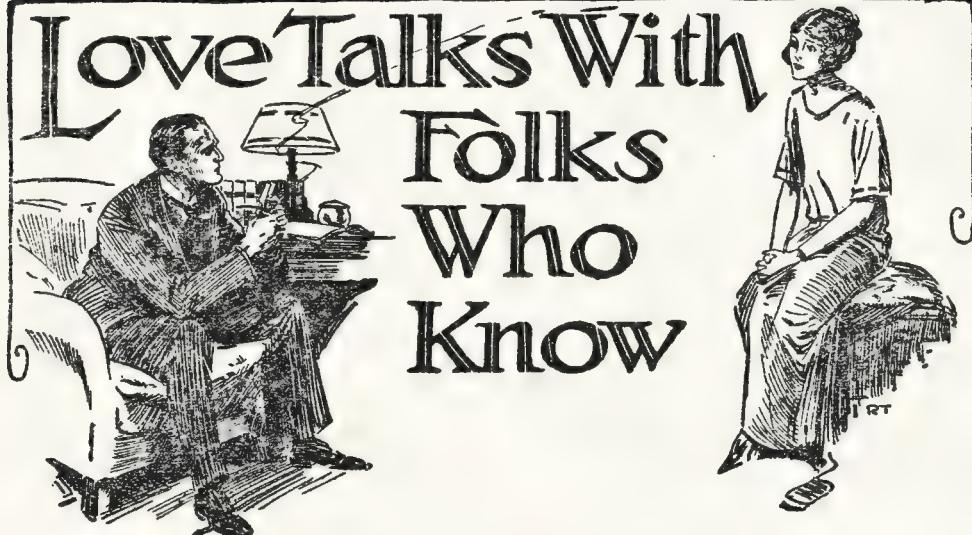
find it intolerable. He knew how her sensitiveness would suffer. He knew how she would shrink from the stones which the world would throw—perhaps even from him!

He could picture Miriam—how she would sneer—the coarse things she would say of his most dear. In that moment Mark knew that his madness had gone forever, and that whatever happened he could never be villain enough to drag down the woman he loved.



DOES suffering intensify love? Watch for  
"Why He Married Her," which  
deals with this problem. It will appear in  
LOVE STORY MAGAZINE soon. . . . .

# Love Talks With Folks Who Know



JUST THE MAN FOR YOU

*By HELEN ROBERTS*

OF course, he's just the man for Jane," Christine had said somewhat patronizingly. "They'll get on splendidly together."

"But wasn't he very interested in you at one time?" asked her cousin curiously.

"Every one seemed to think he was."

"Oh, yes!" hastily. "But of course he's not my type."

"Or, in other words," broke in her sister sarcastically, "he's good enough for Jane, but not good enough for you." Which was not really so very far from the truth.

Christine didn't know quite what she wanted, but she didn't want Jane's man. He was the solid type, rather retiring, rather slow in speech, very steadfast; but not the type she would wish to introduce to her friends as her future husband. She could hear, somehow, their vague, noncommittal "Ohs!" when she had wanted them all to say enviously, "How lucky you are!" She wanted a man with whom she would be proud to be seen, who would be the center of social gatherings, popular wherever he

went: tall, good-looking, and very clever. She hadn't met any one quite like that, but that was the hazy notion she had at the back of her mind. And in the meantime she didn't want Jane's man.

Christine didn't want him. Jane married him. And four years later the two girls met again.

There were Jane and her man, as happy as two people could be, with their small daughter. Not going out very much because the small daughter chained them to their home; but happy with that inward happiness that has nothing to do with the impressions you are making on other folk.

There was Christine. Not married to a popular, sparkling man, but engaged to one, until quite recently. Until she had seen what a lot of living up to a popular, sparkling man needs. And how she had to fight to hold her own when that popular, sparkling man was surrounded by a crowd of the prettiest girls in the neighborhood; until she realized how she longed sometimes to be

able to be her perfectly natural self to him; to go with her hair not quite at its best, and a mediocre frock on; to say just what she liked and be rather dull herself when she felt tired.

She couldn't imagine him, somehow, staying at home leading a quiet domestic life like Jane and her husband were having to do just now.

And she would have given anything, then, for some one like Jane's man.

I don't mean that there are not hundreds of men who can combine the charm of the popular, handsome, scintillating man with the sterling good qualities of the more ordinary one. Or that the more ordinary ones are not sometimes hopelessly and unchangeably boring throughout their lives.

Only when you have a man like Jane's husband, who is so very sure that he wants you, and who is so obviously

prepared to serve you until the end of his days—and at present there is no other man—it is rather challenging fate to sacrifice him for an ideal whom you may never meet. If you want to get married.

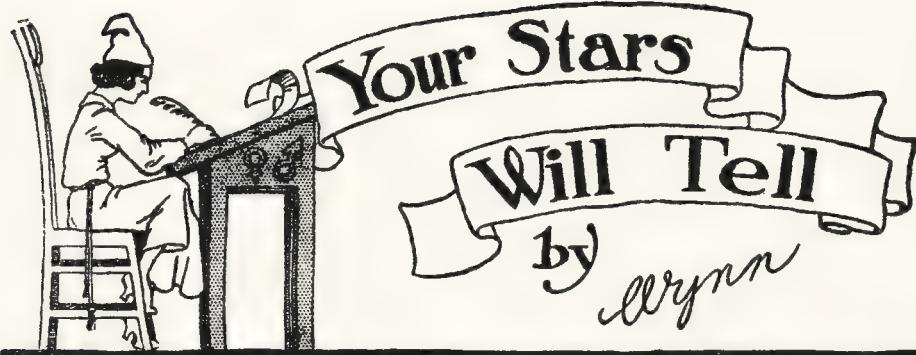
For men who are seemingly rather dull in public are often surprisingly good company at home, if only you give yourself time to know them.

Marriage, too, is so very largely a matter of propinquity, that although there may be hundreds of men in the world who can combine all the qualities of your ideal, and who would be mutually attracted to you the probability is that you never will meet.

And the more undecided, restless, and imaginative the girl is, the more important it is that she should marry a man who knows quite decidedly what he wants.



WHAT trait of character would you have the outstanding one in the man you love? Judith sought "*Honor.*" Read the story, by Mary Spain Vigus. . . It will appear soon in  
LOVE STORY MAGAZINE



**Editor's Note:** This department is conducted for the benefit of the readers of "Love Story Magazine" as well as for their entertainment, but neither the publishers nor the author can assume responsibility for the reliability of any statement made herein, for incorrect data is often furnished, even when the sender has every reason to believe it correct. Wynn does not make any claim whatever to superhuman knowledge or power, making all deductions by means of the positions of the planets alone, and the results must be taken for what they are worth in the light of your experience.

In order that the greatest number of readers may use the department, each is limited to asking one question. Your questions should be about yourself or your problems. No questions about lost articles, the stock market or gambling will be answered.

Give as much as you can of the following data: date, month, year and place of birth, the hour of the day or night if possible, and the sex.

*Once more we are devoting all of our space to questions and answers.*

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Will I ever marry, and, if so, when? Born June 11, 1903. M. E. M.

It is most likely that you will marry twice. Once disastrously, unless you use exceedingly good care in the choice of a husband. I cannot tell from your horoscope how to renew the friendship you mention, but can say that you are well matched, and unless the friendship is resumed, you are not apt to marry until 1933.

What are some of the high spots the future holds for me? Born November 29, 1903. L. W. H.

The next year or so will be quiet for you, but there will be changes of a chaotic character in 1927 and 1928. Try to avoid them. The year 1934 will be a successful and interesting year. Avoid trips and keep a tight rein on your emotions in 1935 and 1936. Don't

permit yourself to become foolishly romantic at that time, for you will have the opportunity. The most successful and happy years of your life will be 1942-1944.

What vocation am I best suited for? Born July 27, 1890. G. W.

Your horoscope indicates that you are very well fitted for religious or charitable work. You would have made a splendid minister, and if you feel any leaning toward anything of this nature, carry out your ideas. As second choice, become a salesman. You would like to sell art objects.

What am I best suited for? Born July 13, 1906. A. T.

Don't ever make the mistake of taking a position where you know you will be bossed. You couldn't endure it. You are headstrong,

often too impulsive and hasty, but at the same time, you are sensitive and affectionate. You are well fitted for some artistic work where you could give some expression to your highly emotional temperament. The arts are very closely associated, even in horoscopes. Why not experiment on the side and discover what your talents are? I believe you could be a successful actress.

Will I marry again? Born November 9, 1894. MRS. E. B. D.

It is doubtful that you will marry again because there are fixed signs predominating in your chart, indicative of only one union. About the time this is printed, Saturn will be affecting you. Look out for your health. The years 1927-1930 will be very successful and happy for you.

What should I make my lifework? Born April 8, 1895. H. W.

You should take up sales work. With such a horoscope as you have, you could sell anything. I would suggest, as first choice, high-grade securities. Take the right sort of training, and then let that fine determination and optimistic spirit of yours carry you to success.

What of my future? Born May 30, 1890. NANETTE.

I am glad you gave me your time of birth. It is the key to your poor health. Scorpio is the rising sign in your horoscope, and for the last two years you have been afflicted by the planet Saturn. You may rest assured that this influence is waning and will be entirely past by 1926. You need not feel you have an unfortunate horoscope. The latter half of your life is going to be much more interesting than the earlier years, and beginning in 1928-1929, there will be many bright and important events for you.

Is it advisable for me to marry this man? Woman, born September 11, 1904; man, born January 16, 1904. H. B. L.

I thoroughly approve of the match. You both have good horoscopes and splendid indications of a long and happy life together. The year 1926 is a favorable time to take the important step.

Will I ever marry? Born March 30, 1901. E. H. H.

It is unlikely that you will ever marry. You will save yourself much unhappiness if you will continue in single blessedness. The

years 1926-1927 are romantic ones for you. They are characterized by a love affair, with opportunity to marry, but I can only tell you that you are one of those people who can get a great deal more happiness out of life by traveling alone.

What vocation am I best suited for? Born December 2, 1906. A. B.

I would suggest that you study advertising or publicity work. You would do well in either occupation. However, bear in mind that you have to apply yourself. You are inclined to be changeable and hasty. Your mentality travels at a much faster rate than the average, but remember you cannot become a master of any work in a minute. Study seriously and you will surely be successful.

What does the future hold for us? Wife, born March 4, 1904; husband, born April 3, 1903. A. M.

You haven't been doing as well as you can do because you both have a tendency toward flying to pieces when things do not go just right. Both of you have a great deal of nervous energy. You start at a thing with zest and then wear out and let it go unfinished. Try to be a little more poised, to make your efforts a little more steady and you'll get along much better.

Will I ever marry? Born September 8, 1896. F. L. S.

You would have been married long ago if you had not been inclined to pick flaws in every one who acted as if he might ask you. You will have another opportunity to marry within the coming year. It will be a good one.

Is it advisable for me to marry this man? Woman, born October 9, 1906; man, born June 21, 1905. MAY.

You are admirably suited to each other, but the best time for you to marry will be in about two years.

Tell me something about myself. Girl, born October 27, 1899. R. M.

You are one of those fortunate persons who has very few bad influences to battle. You are naturally generous, and accept any form of discipline or criticism graciously. You seldom get discouraged. You will find that your ability to come back harder than ever after defeat will be a great help all through your life.



# The Friend in Need

Department conducted by  
*Laura Alston Brown*

IS dress of a great deal of importance? Are you sensitive about the clothes your young men friends wear when they take you out?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am seventeen years old and have been going with a fellow eight months. I think he cares a little for me. He says he does and acts like it. I like him, but he does not dress to suit me.

During the summer he has been coming in every night. He has a machine, and he thinks that is all I go with him for, but it is not. I gave up another fellow for him, and he knows it. He is very affectionate and cannot let me alone.

He is also jealous and does not want me to go out with any one else. He says that will be the only thing to stop him coming to see me.

He is all the time talking about getting married. He is of different religion from me, but he said he would go my way. Do you think he really means it? I am not a flapper, although I like to keep up to styles, and like to have a good time. I have a good position as a typist, and would not like to give it up. Do you think he really loves me, and do you think he is the one to marry? He is black haired and real brown in his complexion and has brown eyes. I am light in complexion, brown eyes, and chestnut-brown hair.

BROWN EYES.

Why don't you like his clothes, Brown Eyes? And as for his talking marriage—don't take any stock in it until he asks you to marry him.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl sixteen years of age; dark-brown hair and eyes, and fair complexion.

Mrs. Brown, my parents are very strict. They won't let me keep company with boys, or hardly talk to them, not that I am too young. That isn't the reason at all. They are trying to make me marry a man that I do not love, and can never love, and I will not marry him.

My only ambition is to become an actress. My parents don't want me to be an actress, and I was forced to go to a business college and study bookkeeping and stenographic work. I studied very hard, and received my diploma. I was the fastest typist in the school. Whenever I went out on a temporary position, if they needed any one again, they never forgot me. I didn't study hard because I loved the work. I studied hard, because I knew that was the only way I could keep up my dancing lessons and become a famous dancer. I am now working for three attorneys, and taking my dancing lessons. I know what an actress' life is, for my cousin is a famous dancer. It is a very hard life I know, but that it my only ambition, and many a time I sit and see myself in a vision, dancing myself on Broadway. Mrs. Brown, I haven't any men on my mind, although I go with very nice men, and they respect me. I will go without bread and water to become a famous dancer. Every one has different ambitions, and we can't all be the same thing. Being an actress is my choice, and don't you think I should go ahead and try to succeed?

Many a time I would be invited to a party, and would get permission from my parents to go. All the week I would plan for it, and just the very minute that I would be ready to leave, my mother would tell me that she decided I couldn't go. Mrs. Brown, that doesn't seem hardly fair. I am a good girl, and want to do what is right. But they think it is terrible if I even say hello to another fellow. They only want me to marry that man and settle down, but I am not going to ruin my life all on account of him. Many people have tried to talk to my mother and change her viewpoint, but it is just like talking to a wall.

Mrs. Brown, please give me some answer to this letter. I can hardly wait to hear from you. Thank you very much for the trouble and time this will take.

ORIENTAL LOUISVILLE GIRL.

Certainly, ambition plays a great part in the world's work. To do any one

thing well deserves commendation. If you feel you have it within you to be a dancer, and through grace and rhythm interpret beauty, I do not see why you are not doing a good thing. To really succeed, one must have an ideal to guide them. To have an ideal, one must live toward it to carve out grand and noble lives. I like to see any person in any profession live up to their ideals. Dancers can do it as well as artists, authors, business people, housewives, and mothers. Try to have a heart-to-heart talk with your mother, with an idea of bringing you nearer together in planning your life work. Nothing like an understanding, you know!

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been married for over a year now and want to say that I don't think any two people get along any better than hubby and I. We have had our hardships, but have always stood by each other through thick and thin. In answer to Sheila's letter—I don't think she should go or write to Larry's brother. How would she like it if he did the same to her sister?

Mrs. Brown, I believe in early marriages, as you see I am only eighteen.

In answer to Lena's letter. Let me tell you, little girl, don't loose any weight over any man. If he really loves you he will come back to you even against his parents' will. All's fair in love and war you know, and wealth isn't everything, is it, dear?

SLIM.

Sometimes—usually—wealth is the smallest part of happiness or no part of it at all.

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am twenty years of age, and I have known a fellow for a long time; by that I mean since I was sixteen. I was introduced to him by his sister, and then he asked me to go out with him. I went. We started to go together and finally had the understanding that some day we would be married.

His folks, nor my folks, did not know that it would amount to anything. We did not let them know, but, just kept on going out together. He thought the world of me, and we thought that I would rather wait until I became of age.

This went on for about one year, and then we had a quarrel, which was my fault. I had

been to his house with his sister, and went home with one of her boy friends, and he got angry. I thought it would pass over and did not worry about it. A week went by, two weeks, and I did not hear from him, until one day I met his sister on the street, and she said: "What do you think, Jack has gone away from home, joined the army? He gave a good job up, and joined the army. Why don't you write to him and cheer him up?"

I did. I told him how sorry I was, and he sent a wonderful letter back telling me that it was on the impulse of the moment, that he had done what he did, but that I should wait for him, and plan. He kept writing until recently. It is time for him to come home, and he has stopped writing to me, for what reason I do not know. He does not write home very much, and when he does he always says that he is ashamed of himself, that I am the only one that ever thought of him when he was away, and he can't seem to write to me.

Mrs. Brown, what would you do, just drop him, or waste the best part of my life on him? Is he worth it?

JUST AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL.

It seems to me that you have answered your own question when you say "waste the best part of my life on him."

DEAR MRS. BROWN: What is your opinion of a man that would cheat a girl out of thirty dollars loaned him when he needed it badly?

Don't say I should hate him because I don't. I'm sorry he wasn't man enough to pay me what he owed after all I did for him.

I don't know if I shall still consider myself engaged to him or not. I have been engaged to him for over a year, then he left and went to another city.

I haven't heard from him for over a month, and I've given up hope of ever hearing from him again.

Don't think I'm broken-hearted, for I can still smile and be thankful I found him out before I married him and not after.

Mother is my best friend, and she told me to forget him, he wasn't worth being unhappy about. But it's always easier said than done.

IF.

It is easier said than done, but I know you are going to do it. I don't think much of a man who will accept money from a woman in the first place.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am seventeen years old and a stenographer.

I like to go out and have good times, by that I mean go to parties and dances.

I go with a fellow who is much older than I am, but he doesn't like to go to parties or dances, he only wants to go for a machine ride or a show. I don't mind that once in a while, but I get tired of just going to the show and for a ride.

When I ask him to go to a dance with me or to a party, he says for me to keep away from dances and parties; there's nothing in them.

He does like me an awful lot, and he also is very jealous. When I ask him to take me some place he generally takes me if it's not to a dance or party.

Do you think I ought to keep away from dances and parties? BRIGHT EYES.

You're too young to miss any good, clean fun that you can have, Bright Eyes. Go to the parties and dances as long as they are the right kind.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been reading your wonderful column for quite a while, and I think your answers and advice are wonderful, but in your answer to Modern Steno, I do not altogether agree with you. You seem somewhat sarcastic by saying to Modern Steno to write in fifteen years from now and tell us where her nose is. I hope Modern Steno will have better sense than to condemn the century she is in, and the so-called flappers of that century. Her letter sounds sensible.

I agree with the Modern Steno in her reply to Happy Wife, whom I think is a crape hanger. Bobbed hair is perfectly all right because she has it. She condemns the modern flapper, saying she doesn't blame men for taking advantage of the modern girl. Who leads these girls on? I would like to hear Happy Wife's answer on that. I work for a firm, and come in contact with many salesmen, both married and single, and the married men are worse than the single. So, Happy Wife, I'd watch my faithful salesman husband, if I were you.

Happy Wife may in the future have, or perhaps she already has, daughters, who will be as the modern flapper, but that will be tolerated I suppose, because it will be her daughters.

A girl nowadays can be popular without going too far. I do not believe in petting parties, smoking, and drinking. But there is no harm in using cosmetics if the flapper does

not go too far, and if she does, it is her complexion that she is ruining, and her money, paying for them, so why should happy wives worry about them? A modern flapper surely doesn't want a man who has been married for fifteen years, and furthermore, Happy Wife, you said he is faithful, so I think it would be best to let up on our flappers.

Congratulations, Modern Steno! I hope to see your name in the department again. As we steno's and flappers have a right to speak for our set. We cannot let some one who is hiding away in Kentuck with a "faithful husband" condemn our set. We are out for our good times. Some day perhaps we may settle with our "faithful husbands!"

SECOND MODERN STENO.

No, my child, I wasn't sarcastic, but I wish you'd write to me, too, in about fifteen years and tell me what you think of the youngsters, then.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am eighteen years old. I am not like the average girl of this generation. I don't mean I am old-fashioned, far from it. I go around with boys and girls of my own age and have some wonderful times, but when my thoughts turn to the future they alter somewhat. I retain the idea that a newly married couple has to "crawl before they can walk." My girl friends, when they talk of the time when they will be married, say they're going to have everything they want at once.

I think I met my fate about four months ago. Of course I wouldn't be too hasty with my decision on a subject of that importance. He is nine years older than I, and is in the navy. I have never seen him but once, and I spent a day with him then. I carry on a friendly correspondence with him. He has never said anything that would lead me to believe that he thought of me, otherwise than a friend, but when I get to dreaming of that love nest that I will some day be mistress of, he seems to be the one in my dreams that will start from the bottom of the ladder with me and go up side by side. I really don't think I could stand a home that was like a storage battery, everything charged.

As for the crazy styles of these days—well, everybody to their own opinion, but for me I prefer my stockings above my knees, especially in cold weather. I had my hair bobbed, but it didn't stay so longer than it grew out enough to get pins to stick in, and I don't think any girl can keep her self-respect if she indulges in smoking. But that is just my personal opinion. It is all right for the ones that like it.

I would like to say a word for Undecided M. I really don't think she would be happy if she married a man she couldn't stand to see every day in the week. If she couldn't stand him now, what kind of a bore do you think it would be to her to hand coffee to him three times a day? I think to be happy you have to love to do the things your husband is fond of; and, furthermore, I don't think a man is capable of loving a girl as a child of ten and as his wife at the same time.

GRAY EYES FROM NORTH CAROLINA.

What a lot of nice little stenos are joining us of late. I like to know that the business girls are reading my department.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: A few points for readers!

Wife beating should not be tolerated. A wife beater is not fit to be a husband.

Neither should one try to boss the other. A little team work goes a long way.

Forgive and forget a few things. No one is perfect.

There are no two men nor two women alike.

Some old fools are blind.

A girl's character cannot always be judged by her appearance.

All fellows are not the berries.

All women are not gold diggers.

Difference in opinion is what makes the world go 'round.

Do the very best you can, and that's all you can do.

Your parents are not always right in their ideas.

C.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I think your understanding of people is truly wonderful. Your wisdom is great and you are fair to all—good and bad.

How often the bitter-sweet past drifts up to face us, when we thought it gone, even the memory. Try though I do, somehow I cannot forget—and I have no right to even keep memory awake, now that I am married and loved by my husband.

Let me tell you a little of how it came about. First, let me say to those who scoff at a fourteen-year-old girl knowing real love, all that is folly—one can love from fourteen on up, and many do. It is not age that one must wait for before one can love, it is developed emotions, and intelligence which makes one recognize love when it comes.

When I was only scarcely fourteen I loved. True, he was only a chap of eighteen him-

self, but now, eight years later, I cannot forget him. Still he comes to me often in my dreams, though I resolutely try to shut all thoughts of him out during the day. My peace of mind is shattered by constantly dreaming of him, or suddenly for no reason at all, thinking of him during the day.

At fourteen we loved each other; not petty, calf love, but something deeper, more lasting. In timid, hurried whispers we would reveal to each other the hopes we had for the future, and we spoke of marriage, a home, and even a baby some day. Calf love? Not that. No one could laugh at it. Our love was the sweetest, purest that could be—we never dragged it in the mire, and it never went further than honest, pure sweetheart days. But that all ended.

I quarreled—deliberately quarreled, for no reason at all. He pleaded, came to my bedroom window in the night, awoke me, and endeavored to get me to give some reason for saying I was through with his love. To all his words of love, and the passionate reproach I saw in his eyes as he talked, I only said, "I don't know why, but I don't love you any more." God only knows what prompted me to say that lie, for I did love him, and even as I spoke the words I knew in my heart they were lies.

But even a young chap's patience does not last forever, and to my awakening horror at my foolishness, he one day turned from me, and at that same time my parents were moving away, and so we left, saying nothing to each other, but never will I forget that ache in my heart as we drove away, and I saw him near the corner, but never coming to say a word of good-by.

Next came four years in high school, the first year I spent in a frenzy of long hours of study, trying to forget, and still the persistent ache in my heart for longing for him. I was said to be a model pupil; my marks soared, and my parents were proud of me, as the city was good sized and they felt my efforts were worth while. But I couldn't look at a boy. When others were meeting new friends, I kept my eyes on my books, and often on my way home from the library or a store at night, I would pass one of the boys in high school that I knew, and one happened to have a voice just like his! Like a shock the sound of that voice went through me, and I would look up sharply, hoping against hope that it might be him. Always it was some one of the high-school boys, passing and saying "Hello." Down went my hopes, and a listless feeling came over me as it seemed he had really forgotten me.

Two years later I one day received a letter,

and I can't express the sensation I felt, on seeing his handwriting there. Almost as if in answer to my prayers and thoughts for him, he had written, and said he hadn't forgotten, though he had met other girls. They didn't seem what he wanted, and would I be kind enough to write to him? Would I? My heart jumped for joy, to think he had forgiven and wanted me yet. In haste I answered, and watched daily for a reply. My mother knew something of it all, I think, for always she had been a wise mother and seemed to understand, though I expect she read all the letters he wrote me, but she never forbade me writing to him or anything like that. For a while we wrote each other steadily, and again I was happy.

Then again, for the last time, fate intervened, and over a misunderstanding he misconstrued something I wrote, and wrote that we were quits. It was the last I heard from him. After that, recklessly I went from one to two or three petty love affairs, seeking to forget, easing the ache that sought for love. But I couldn't forget. For a time I would think it all over, then back came the thoughts of the past, and the longing was there as strong as ever.

After high school, when I graduated with honors because of my hard studying through those four years, I left my home State, and went West, to California. One month after I arrived here I was introduced to a man of thirty-nine, and four months later we were married here. Swiftly and surely he carried on his courtship, telling me again and again to my answer, which was always, "No, I will not marry you." "Well, time will tell." And I did begin to like him, as he was always around, took me places, and it was the novelty of his being so different. He was a typical city man, matured, sure of himself, and I was only eighteen, my first time in this big city, and I became enamored with him and his stories of life. During those four months he gave me no opportunity to think of anything. Constantly he kept after me, bringing me candy, taking me out, calling me up, persistently telling me I was going to marry him.

And I did. Three years have passed. But still I can't forget. He is good to me, loves me, believes in me, and is all one could ask of a husband as far as love and kindness is concerned. And in a way I love him. I have a sort of maternal feeling akin to pity for him, as he is not well, and often is up nights, being sick. This sickness comes in spells, so never interferes with his working, as the spells do not last.

But the other one? The last time I heard

from one of the girls back there, he was engaged to a girl, but not married. Fiercely, in my heart, I hope and hope he will never marry any one. Though I am all a wife should be, in actions, I know my thoughts would astound my husband, and I know they are untrue to him.

We have no children, and I cannot think of having one. I want as my children's father the boy I loved so long ago. **GIRL.**

But can any woman be a good wife to one man while she is thinking of another?

**DEAR MRS. BROWN:** I wish to say to Rough on Rouge that I'm talking pretty plain, but I think she showed her ignorance in her letter about painted women. Rough on Rouge, people of your caliber could easily sit four and five in a chair, couldn't they? Pride you must remember comes before a fall.

God's book says there is none perfect. One of his laws of life is, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Jesus told the people who were going to stone the Magdalene: "He who is free from sin, let him cast the first stone." Do you remember what happened?

For every good person there is some one else who is just as good; the same with bad people. If your aunt has broken up happy homes there's a man somewhere who has done just as much damage, and I expect a trifle more, when it comes to ruining young girls. Be charitable! See what a great sweet, clean feeling there is in your soul after you have done a little uplifting work.

I don't use rouge—I'm an invalid—but I have, and can again, and not feel very sinful either. Nasty thoughts and deeds can beat rouge to a finish in making us pals of the devil.

And now let's shake. For, for every fault in any other human I suspect I have a mate for it.

**PLAIN-SPOKEN MIC.**

There's a lot of truth in what you write.

**DEAR MRS. BROWN:** I shall discuss two subjects: the girl of to-day and the modern young man.

The modest, shy, timid girl of yesteryear is the self-respecting, self-reliant, and self-supporting business girl of to-day. This is a fact readily admitted by those possessing the proper supply of gray matter. I have found out from both observation and experience that the business world is absolutely and unconditionally no place for shrinking violets.

I am a girl twenty-four years of age, and have been a business girl for seven years. Business men have no desire whatever for such nonsensical ignoramuses as the shrinking violets in their service. They desire proficient, level-headed, clear-thinking girls, who are capable of meeting the public, meeting strangers in the business world, discussing and handling business matters when necessary, as well as performing other numerous duties, and these are duties in which the shrinking-violet type could never qualify.

Let me present a few questions. Who, as a rule, purchases the new dress or hat for mother? Or the new library table? Daughter, of course. Or the new reading lamp? Or the new easy-chair for dad? Daughter, again, and this daughter is the average girl of today—not an empty-headed, silly, flirtatious, good-time girl, but the business girl.

Very, very seldom does son notice these little trifles which are needed at home, as he is too much occupied having a good time with various members of the fair sex.

Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow;  
He who would search for pearls  
Must dive below.

Am I not correct?

You can't possibly educate a grasshopper, because he's too busy hopping, and contingently, he enjoys hopping. Even so with most men. They are so intent upon having a good time with a coterie of girls, that they give thought to little else.

Perhaps some day you men will fully realize that you will get in a wife exactly the type of girl you assist in developing before marriage.

Be devoted to one person at a time, and you will find happiness. Happiness is a sort of a habit and requires tender cultivation; but it can never be cultivated by promiscuous distribution of one's self.

JUST A BUSINESS GIRL.

There is much truth in what you say.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl twenty years old. Have been reading your department for two years, and think it is wonderful.

I have noticed several letters commenting on the subject of petting. Well, here's my little say: No one likes an iceberg, so what harm is there in a little petting?

I know some will say, there is harm. Well, if a girl can't go so far, and quit before going too far, then she shouldn't try at all. I know, for I lost the only fellow I ever cared

for, through being the iceberg. A little affection on my part would have doubtless held him. The fortunate one he goes with now proves that. I don't go with any one now, not because I wouldn't, but they don't care to for the above reasons. That is, the ones I would go with. But those I wouldn't keep company with are the ones who clamor for dates. But that is the way of the world.

Belle of the Bronx, I am with you. All the knockers are invited to knock back.

BEBE.

But why should they, my dear? We all have a right to our opinions.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I would like to talk to Georgia.

Even though she doesn't think she could get a kick out of barn dancing, she should be careful with her criticisms. If you had lived in 1876, Georgia, you, no doubt, would be entering into that barn dance with all the pep you put into these 1925 rotten jumping steps. But there! That's being frank, isn't it? Did you ever stop to think of your dependence. Do you realize that if you remain a flapper that you're remaining dependent.

As you say, Mrs. Brown, it isn't always the ultra-modern girl that is being sought.

Jaun W. is a fine young man, I'll bet. His letter tells what a true woman should be. She is a tree, and in order to bear her fruit successfully she must live in the right way. Her body, heart, mind, and soul should be kept clean.

I'm a young girl. Naturally living in this modern world one can't help seeing the wrong-doers. Nevertheless, if we see some one else petting or mushing or whatever you flappers call it, there's no reason why one should repeat it.

I'm not an angel. I'm a church worker and a stenographer. My boy and girl friends have utmost respect for me. I feel like I've seen Mr. Right, though he didn't slow down, but I'm still

WAITING.

He doubtless will if you keep on in the splendid way you've started.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I went with a man for nine years, and I thought I loved him. I believe I did, though I was only a kid. I am twenty-six now. He kept putting me off, saying we would be married in the spring, and, dear Mrs. Brown, spring never did come.

I decided he did not care for me in the right way, so I quit going with him and went to going with Les. I know now I loved Les,

but I am afraid it's too late. I let the first man come between Les and I, and then we broke up again, and I met and married Pat. In less than four months we were separated, and now I have the sweetest little girl in the world. She will soon be two.

I called Les up the other day and he took me home and he said he still loved me and would never love any one else. But he don't seem to want to talk to me over the phone and he never calls me up. Do you think he is trying to do me like I did him years ago? I love him, and I believe he knows it now, but I'm afraid it's too late. Please tell me what to do.

I am happy in the love of my darling baby and blessed mother, and anyway I know God has been good to me and is good to us all, though we don't know it. We are blind to most of His goodness.

HAPPY.

He may be but I doubt it, for a man who is in love rarely wants revenge. Perhaps he just doesn't like telephone conversations, especially during business hours. Have you ever invited him into your home? On the other hand he may feel that he doesn't want to marry now. Let him make the advances. You'll not have to wonder then whether he is sincere or not.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: There seems to be quite a discussion about modern girls, and, being just that, I would like to contribute my say.

I think that the men of to-day are very unfair regarding the up-to-date girl. If you could see me to-day you would never believe it was the same person of a year ago. I would stay in often simply because I knew that the fellows who called me up to take me out expected payment in return for the good times they were willing to give. But I was inclined to be wild, and loneliness began to creep on me.

Pretty soon I was accepting invitations, and being a good entertainer and not bad in looks, I was constantly chased after. I'm still going at that rate. Yet, when I meet a fellow who seems to be a rather quiet chap, I act differently. But it always turns out that they are worse than the others. I guess there is a bit of bad in every man, and no matter how good the girl is, he will try petting. So do you blame me if I prefer the other ones? They at least are open and frank, whereas the others are still waters and run deep.

BUBBLES.

You seem to have a pretty clearly defined plan upon which to work and a very definite philosophy but, after all, don't you find that you are a little happier on the evening when you haven't petted than you are on the evenings when you have?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I, like a good many others, have come to you with a problem. I have been going with a young man for three years. He is twenty-eight, I am twenty-two. We love each other very much, but there is one thing that is separating us.

His mother is very much against him marrying any one. She knows about me, but does not want to meet me. He told me last night he would take me to see his mother, but he knows she would insult me, and as I am very sensitive we could never agree.

She is not a well woman, and has been sick for some time with nervousness, and he is in hopes when she is better she will feel different about it. I would have to live with her, or she with us, as there is no one else at home, and my friend says he knows we could not agree. Although he does not want to give me up he does not know what to do.

I told him last night we had better forget each other; as things are, we can never be happy. But don't you think to do the right thing would be to take me to meet her and give both of us a fair show? Even if she is against it now, I feel she may be different. My friend tells me she is just beginning to get better, and the shock of him thinking of marrying may set her back. What I wonder is, should I have waited to see if in a year or so, when she is better, she might change, or did I do right in ending it now?

I love this man, and he loves me, and it was very hard to see the way he took it when I told him we must forget under the circumstances. She was just the same when his brother married. She said that the shock was what made her sick, but then the girl did not have to live with her, as my friend was left. I have met the brother. I stayed a week at their home this summer, and I like both the brother and sister-in-law, but that does not alter the mother problem. Please tell me whether or not I should let this drop. I am very unhappy.

I am not a flapper, do not paint or dress flashy. I cook, sew, and am a real home type. Nothing would suit me better than to have the man I love and a family, as I love babies.

We are a different religion. I tell my

friend that is the real reason. He says not; that it makes no difference to him.

ROSE MARIE.

There are so many mothers who make their son's lives unhappy by not wanting them to marry—they are usually fond mothers, too, mothers who have let motherhood have precedence over everything else. Try to see it from that point of view, Rose Marie. It isn't fair to you and it is not fair to the son, but that condition often exists and the easiest way—in this one case—is the best way. I don't believe I'd give up the young man's friendship unless he feels that he simply cannot bring himself to tell his mother that he has found the girl he loves. If you feel that it is hopeless then don't spend any more time and thought on him but if he wants to keep your affection and tries to plan some way of bringing things to a happy ending then have patience. Remember that mothers of his mother's kind have given their whole life to their children and that is why they find it so hard to share them. It is no feeling against the girl—just a sort of maternal selfishness which must be forgiven.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am seventeen years old, and last year I was in constant company with a young man twenty-two years old. Later I discovered he was married, but was not living with his wife. My folks discovered it just about the same time I did, and forbade my keeping company with him.

I love him and he loves me, and he is now living in a distant town in California and wishes me to go to him. But there is my mother to consider and he is not divorced. I love him, but what shall I do? L. A.

Stay with your mother by all means. If the man really loves you, L. A., he would not ask you to leave your home unless he could give you the protection of his.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: We are three young girls, ages seventeen and nineteen. We are stenographers and work alone, therefore we

meet very few people during the day. We do not dance or belong to any clubs. We are not old-fashioned, but when we go out we like to have a good time.

We know quite a few fellows, but they are all alike. We never care to have a second date with them.

We are not typical flappers. We don't flirt, drink, or smoke, and we cannot understand why the fellows behave toward us as they do, as we certainly do not encourage it.

They will have nothing to do with decent girls, and refer to them as "hounds;" in fact, they don't think there are any decent girls, or at least they try to make us believe they don't.

We went out one night with a couple of fellows, but when they found out that we were not the kind of girls that they were used to going with they said that we were the nicest ones that they knew, but ever since all the fellows that we know act different; some of them will pass us up without speaking to us.

Fellows say that they don't want a girl that has been kissed by every Tom, Dick, and Harry. What girl wants a fellow that has kissed and petted every girl that he ever met?

All that a fellow wants to do when he makes a date with a girl is to take her out riding, park on a country road, and pet. The next day he will have her name all over town as "a good necker" or "an easy mark." Of course the fellow never does anything out of the way.

The older fellows and the young ones are all alike, never have any respect for a girl. If they think all girls are like themselves it is high time that they wake up and find out that we are not. Yes, there are a few girls that aren't so good, but why judge all by those few?

There are a few nice fellows left.

THREE GOOD LITTLE GIRLS.

Speak up, boys!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have had to work for my living since I was fourteen. Being the child of my parents' old age I did not have the advantage of high-school and college education. But I studied hard evenings and worked during the day, and now I have a trade where I can demand a good salary; in fact, more than my sisters and brothers have made. My ambition is to be a writer, and my dearest hope to see my stories printed.

Four years ago I married a man I dearly love. We have been very happy. We have a nice home of our own and a car. I believe

a wife is essential to a man's happiness, and that works both ways. We have our little scraps, of course, but then true love never did run smooth, and we make it a point not to screech, swear, or nag at each other. I try to be the best of wives as far as I know. I always get up in time in the morning to make something he likes for breakfast, and have his dinner ready when he comes home. He knows I try hard, and sometimes when I am not at home he never nags, but cheerfully goes about heating his dinner, which I leave ready for him. I work sometimes for a week or two to buy little things for the house, and he appreciates it. I have a reputation of being a good cook and all the boys talk about my pies and cake, and love to spend an evening with us. There has been many an argument about the difference in ages in your columns, and I want to say that it doesn't make a particle of difference when both persons are alike in their tastes. We have been very happy and there is fifteen years difference in our ages. Hubby being the older and feeling and acting just as young as I am. I am twenty-two.

I do all my own work and make my own clothes. I think any woman who loves her man ought to love keeping their home clean and pretty, and love to cook his favorite dishes. I do. I don't believe in living with mother-in-law, as two women, no matter how much they like one another, have entirely different ideas about running a household.

About the flapper question—I don't see what every one is so riled up about. I think the flapper is just as nice as her mother ever was or her grandmother before her. Short hair and short skirts don't look half as silly as bustles and wigs and hoop skirts. A flapper is merely a slave of fashion, like all women were back through the ages.

I have bobbed hair and I like it, it is comfortable and sanitary. And as to smoking, I never smoke in public, but I do smoke in the privacy of my own home with my husband. He says I am his pal, and when we talk over business if he hands me his cigarette case I take one like any pal would.

There is only one cloud in the horizon, and that is that we haven't any children, but maybe we can find a little homeless waif some day and love it into living. I believe you get out of life what you give, and I think I have had a very happy life, even though I have not any children. We can't have everything, and I think I have been lucky.

#### HAPPILY MARRIED.

You have, but you have been so because you have wanted to be and have

worked intelligently toward that end. Most marriages could be happy marriages if both parties would try to make them so. Thank you for your fine letter.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I think that Another Who Loves His Fellow Beings is a man that some little girl will be proud of some day. Listen, Another Who Loves His Fellow Beings, if any girl fools you I wouldn't worry about it, because any woman that will fool a man or go with him for the money he spends on her is not worth the love a respectable fellow can give her.

I have heard so many girls say: "Go with So-and-so, he sure spends a lot of money on you." Of course, I do not think there is any fellow who wants to be termed cheap, and if he takes a girl to a restaurant, no matter what she orders he will pay it, but any decent sort of a girl will use her judgment when ordering.

I am eighteen years of age and know how to hold my own. I am never without the companionship of young boy friends or "my pals" as I call them.

When I go to a dance I am never without partners, and only sit out a dance when I am tired. This may sound foolish, but my chum and I never stag it to a dance unless our mothers can go with us, and, believe me, the fellows certainly respect us.

Many and many times our boy friends have taken us home after the dance, and were very glad to take our mothers home, too. You know there is a saying that one can judge another person by the way they treat their folks.

I am popular, but I can say this much, that I didn't win my popularity by kissing every Tom, Dick, and Harry that came along.

Now a word to Lonesome. Buck up a little, Lonesome! The only way to get a friend is by being one. Flatter the boys a little, be a pal to them, sympathize with them when they are in trouble, and you will see they will flock to you and will fight for your companionship.

#### A PAL TO ALL.

Your good letter should be a tip to girls who want to know how to get and keep friends.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: After reading several of your advice column, and finding them so interesting, I'm going to write you and let you give me some advice. Advice never hurts any one.

I'm eighteen, blond, with wavy hair. I

have compliments paid to my good looks—but I can't convince myself as to the same. Still I'm not condemning the other "fella" as being a liar—excuse my term—good looks are not all these days, at least I don't think so.

I've gone to school all my life, and don't know what it is to struggle for my own living.

I've always been popular with the young folks as well as the older people. I've always enjoyed myself wherever I have gone. I've met many boys, but only one I was particularly interested in. I'm really convinced I love him. I would have done anything for him, I love him so well, but he told me frankly, after seeing me for some time, that he once loved a girl, but she was won by some other man, and he added that he never could love any one else. He said he liked me as far as friendship goes. I then told him I was glad he was frank about it all—but I'm not, and if he had not told me I could have lived in hopes.

Several months ago I met a very nice young man who reminded me of my friend I loved so much. He started coming out to see me regularly and we became the best of pals. It was remarked: "Wherever you see Jack you see Ellen, and everywhere you see Ellen you see Jack." Of course as far as I was concerned Jack and I were only pals.

One evening Jack called and said he could not come out and take me for our usual ride, and I, curious to know why, asked him.

He said I don't want to tell you, Ellen. Right then and there I knew it was another girl, and I told him so. For a moment I was hurt, little do I know why, and I only said: "Don't forget me, Jack, I'm always your pal." "No!" he said, "I'll never forget you." That happened about six weeks ago. He hasn't called nor have I heard from him in any way.

Do you believe there is a way that I could bring him back to care for me as he always said he did? Of course time will tell the tale, but it may be some long time, so I've selected my profession, that of a nurse. Three years of school. Perhaps by that time I shall forget—but I doubt it.

ELLEN.

You may not have forgotten, really, Ellen, but there will be some one else. Youth does not mourn long—and it would be foolish to do so.

DEAR FRIEND IN NEED: Your department is wonderful! I wonder if I may write you and tell you my troubles?

First may I say a word to Pansy? Not only to her, but many other girls say:

"Should I tell him? It will be a hard thing to do, because I love him so much."

It shouldn't be hard if you love him. Tell him and he will admire you for your truthfulness, wait until too late and he will find it out, which would mark you as a coward.

I am married, and have been for two years. I was married in California when I was seventeen years old. At that time I was living in Oregon. I ran away with the man of my choice, but not of my mother's. We kept our marriage a secret, and finally, about two months later, I told my mother. Honestly I broke her heart. She forgave me; but I could always see that pained look in her eyes.

The man I married was not all he should be, as he had a terrible past. Blind, as youth is at seventeen, I thought I could help him live it down. We were getting along fine until I went home on a visit. Mother only lived about forty miles away. The last night of my visit, when I was waiting for him to come for me, the telephone rang and it was his mother. He was in trouble again. Mrs. Brown, I just wanted to die, but God has his own way of doing things. To make a long, long, heartbreaking story short, after all was over we left.

I didn't write home for a long time. After a year and three months I received a letter from my mother. She had forgiven all, and wondered if I could be home for my sister's wedding. Think of it—asking me back for a big wedding when I had disgraced them all!

Mrs. Brown, I get awfully lonesome, and would love to go back home. I want to finish high school and be some one. You wonder why now? Because I have met the only one? No, because I don't feel like I should toward the man I married. If ever I am free again I only want to go back to my wonderful mother. The one thing is to try and repay her.

Just one thing more, Mrs. Brown, you can always find another man, but we only have one mother.

BABE.

By all means go back for the wedding. You have much to be thankful for because all of your life you will have the memory of a wonderful mother. Instead of planning what you would do if you were free, make the best of the material at hand.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have read the letter written by Another Who Loves His Fellow Beings," and wish to thank him for his fine sentiments.

I trust he will never change his views, and, above all, no matter what happens, never lose faith. I have found that faith is the greatest thing in the world.

I am a girl twenty years of age who lost faith in her friends with the result that I was quite friendless for two years. On second thought it wasn't faith so much as that I couldn't trust them any more. But now I have slowly begun to find friends again, and since reading the above party's letter I have begun to hope that I will find friends who will understand and know the value of true friendship.

#### ONE WHO HAS REGAINED FAITH.

Nothing can so enrich our lives as friendship. Every human being needs the companionship of other human beings. I think the best way to keep really sincere friends is to be a really sincere friend.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Why are there so many narrow-minded people in this world? Do they think a girl is bad just because she enjoys a good time and acts a bit wild?

I have had quite a bit of experience in this line, and would like to tell you of a few things.

Although I am only eighteen, I have been in the theatrical business three years. I guess you know that if any one needs sympathy it is the poor chorus girl, who is always being condemned and carries a bad reputation wherever she goes.

I like a good time and see no harm in smoking, as I do so myself. Is that a sign I'm bad? But, of course, as you will all agree, there is a limit to everything.

I am with a traveling show, and whenever we get into small and strange towns people look as though we were a crowd of criminals. And, of course, the boys are always at their posts to insult us.

When I do go out, which is very seldom, I think I'll have to use my fists some time to keep the boys in their place. Then comes the slam: "I thought you were a chorus girl." Of course I am a chorus girl, but that is no sign I allow boys to pet me. I don't let my friends do it, so why should I allow strange boys to? Of course I will admit there are some who do, which makes it bad for the rest, but why should they judge all by a few?

I have traveled quite a bit, have been to Cuba and South America as well as the United States, and no matter where I go things are

just the same, with the exception of home, which is in Chicago. They treat me right there, because they know I am the right kind of a girl. I have gone to school with the majority of them, and they treat me as they would want others to treat their sisters.

Now, Mrs. Brown and readers, wherever I go, and whatever I do, I always act the part of the lady, never encourage boys, just go on my way and attend to my own business, still I hear the same words: "Here comes a chorus girl."

Why must we be condemned?

CHORUS GIRL.

Has every one been so hard on you as that? I'm sure I know a great many people who number chorus girls among their friends and think a great deal of them. It isn't a girl's business or profession that brings her certain sorts of attention. It is her own conduct.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I would like to say a few words to Just a Toy. I don't like her way of saying that she knows more than her mother. A girl that is only eighteen is a mere child. She has lots to learn about life.

I am twenty and my mother is forty-seven, and I still go to my mother for advice. I think if she was married when she was fourteen, she was too young to get married, don't you?

I would like to say a few words to the girls who are always saying that though they allow boys to kiss and pet them they do not drink or smoke. My mother always told me that she thought if a girl would allow a man to kiss and pet her she is just as liable to drink and smoke, too.

I can't see why a girl will allow it if she does not like it. This idea of love at fifteen and sixteen is all bunk. No girl knows her own mind at such an age.

I am not a kill joy at a party, but I can say that I am not always in company of young men. My advice is always expect in return what you give, and you will not be disappointed.

A HAPPY GIRL.

Thank you for your good letter.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I want to write a few lines to Lonesome. Why don't you try this, Lonesome? When you go to a little party where members of the opposite sex are present, act friendly, but at the same time don't let them see that you are longing for an opportunity to hold a conversation with

them. Remain aloof, indifferent, but cheerful, and win their hearts by letting them see that you are not a man hunter. Most flappers throw themselves at a man's head, which causes a man to disrespect them.

True, men take such girls out, but only for the time being. They pet, and kiss them until they get disgusted, and then throw them aside, adding their name to the list of girls who cheapen themselves with every Tom, Dick, and Harry that comes along.

Mrs. Brown was right, when she said, "Do not be constantly on the lookout for that one man." Try them all, and then choose the best man for your lifemate. Don't let them pet or kiss you, and you will find that you will have many admirers.

I was once a lonesome girl, and have tried the above remedy, and I have so many friends that I really do not know what to do with them all.

I am eighteen and have been married for two months. I am superbly happy, and have the dearest boy in the world for a husband. We have a little cottage all our own, furnished with furniture that is all paid for, and live only for each other's happiness.

When I was sixteen years old I was called a wallflower. My friends all said that I would die an old maid, and I had begun to prepare for my life as a spinster. Then I met my husband. I had been asked, out of sheer pity by a girl friend, to accompany her to a party given by a fellow that I had not even heard of. I met my husband there.

GLORIA.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I write you a story which may sound too good to be true? It is the story of my married life.

Nearly three years ago I was engaged to a man whom I will call Steve. I thought I loved him. We were to be married on the fourteenth of January. On the first of December a man, we will call him Jack, who had called on my sister several times called and asked if he might come to see me for a few minutes. I told him he might. So he came. I don't know how it happened, but we were sitting in front of the living-room fire when he puts his arms around me and kissed me. I knew then and there that I had never loved Steve. Jack and I just sat and looked into each other's eyes and knew that we had found our true love. On the twenty-fourth of December we were quietly married at my father's home in the room where we had found our love.

We now have a darling baby girl two years old.

My husband is now in Florida, and has been

for two months. I am staying at my father's till the other little mite arrives, and then I will join my lover husband in Florida, where we will make our future home.

We are just as happy now as we were when we were first married. We are both looking forward to what will seem like a second honeymoon.

So many girls don't believe in kissing before they are engaged, but if it brings them to as much happiness as it brought me, I'd tell them to kiss!

A HAPPY WIFE AND MOTHER.

What a lovely life you must lead. Write us again after you reach Florida. And good luck!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I want to know if there are any other girls in the same boat I am, and, if so, I would love to have them write that I may hear of their difficulties.

I really feel ashamed when I think of the girls who have real troubles, and I don't really have any, aside from the fact that I just get lonesome and long for a bit of excitement and pleasure. My main object in coming to your department is to ask you and your readers what chance you think a girl of twenty-five years has who is single, not having one boy friend and who holds decency above all things on earth? I don't mean that I am stiff and don't love a good time because I most certainly do, and I have always been considered good looking and am a good dresser, and my parents, or I should say my mother, as my father is deceased, has always been one of the most highly respected citizens of this city.

We have a nice home, all modern, which we have worked hard to get, and I help support my mother, as she has no means of her own. I am a pal to my mother in every sense of the word. I shudder to think what I would do if I didn't have her, as then I wouldn't have a chum at all.

I am a trifle backward, but I always try to join in wherever I am. I love movies and attend them a lot, and I love to drive a car, and drive one well, but I never have a boy friend, and I would so love to have some one to take me places just once in a while. Also, I would love a home of my own and some dear babies to take care of. I just stand back and see the other girls having a good time and I try to be one of them. I don't know that I have an enemy, yet the price for being decent seems to be loneliness. Just a few days ago a young man told me there were very few girls about whom there was as little said concerning their character as

there was mine, and I just asked him where he thought one got with being that kind. It sure doesn't get you anywhere.

Still, I want to be always just as clean as I have been all my life; there is something which seems to hold me to that ideal. If I go out with a girl friend and we make the acquaintance of a young man, the other girl gets the attention and I listen, and I don't understand, as I have traveled quite a lot and can converse on most anything and try to be agreeable.

I always go to mother and ask her why these things are, but poor mother cannot tell

me. She is at a loss as well as I. When I was younger I wasn't so alone, but I guess I have got past the age when a girl can have boy friends. Mother always points out to me the chances I have had to marry, but I just can't marry some one for whom I do not care, and that seems to be another trouble. Some one is always caring for me, and I just can't marry them when I don't care for them. Isn't there any one for whom I could care?

A LONESOME GIRL.

Perhaps you're not friendly enough. It ought to be easy to make friends.

**Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire her advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.**

**Address Mrs. Laura Alston Brown, Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.**

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**Statement of the Ownership, Management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of the LOVE STORY MAGAZINE, published weekly, at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1925.**

**State of New York, County of New York (ss.)**

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Ormond G. Smith, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is President of the Street & Smith Corporation, publishers of *LOVE STORY MAGAZINE*, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: *Publishers*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *editor*, Ruth A. Abeling, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *managing editors*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *business managers*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; a corporation composed of Ormond G. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George C. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York,

N. Y.; Annie K. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George C. Smith, Jr., 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Cora A. Gould, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Ormond V. Gould, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

ORMOND G. SMITH, President,  
Of Street & Smith Corporation, publishers.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 18th day of September, 1925. Francis S. Duff, Notary Public No. 173, New York County. (My commission expires March 30, 1927.)



Dear Buddy:

Do you remember saying the other day when we were camping along the Big Muddy, how you wished you could get hold of a good, old-fashioned, red-blooded Western story again?

I've found it, Bud. Here's the name. Paste it in your hat—"The Golden Bowl."

It's by our old favorite, Harrison Conrard, and it's all about a bang-up fight for a treasure and a girl on the Arizona desert. No, I'm not even going to give you an outline of the plot. But take my tip and get it to-night.

"The Golden Bowl" is just one of the popular priced, seventy-five-cent books that is for sale at any good dealer's under the "CH" brand, and take it from me, when you see that mark on the jacket of a book you're in for a spell of slick reading.

My best to you, old-timer, and the bunch,

Bill



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